

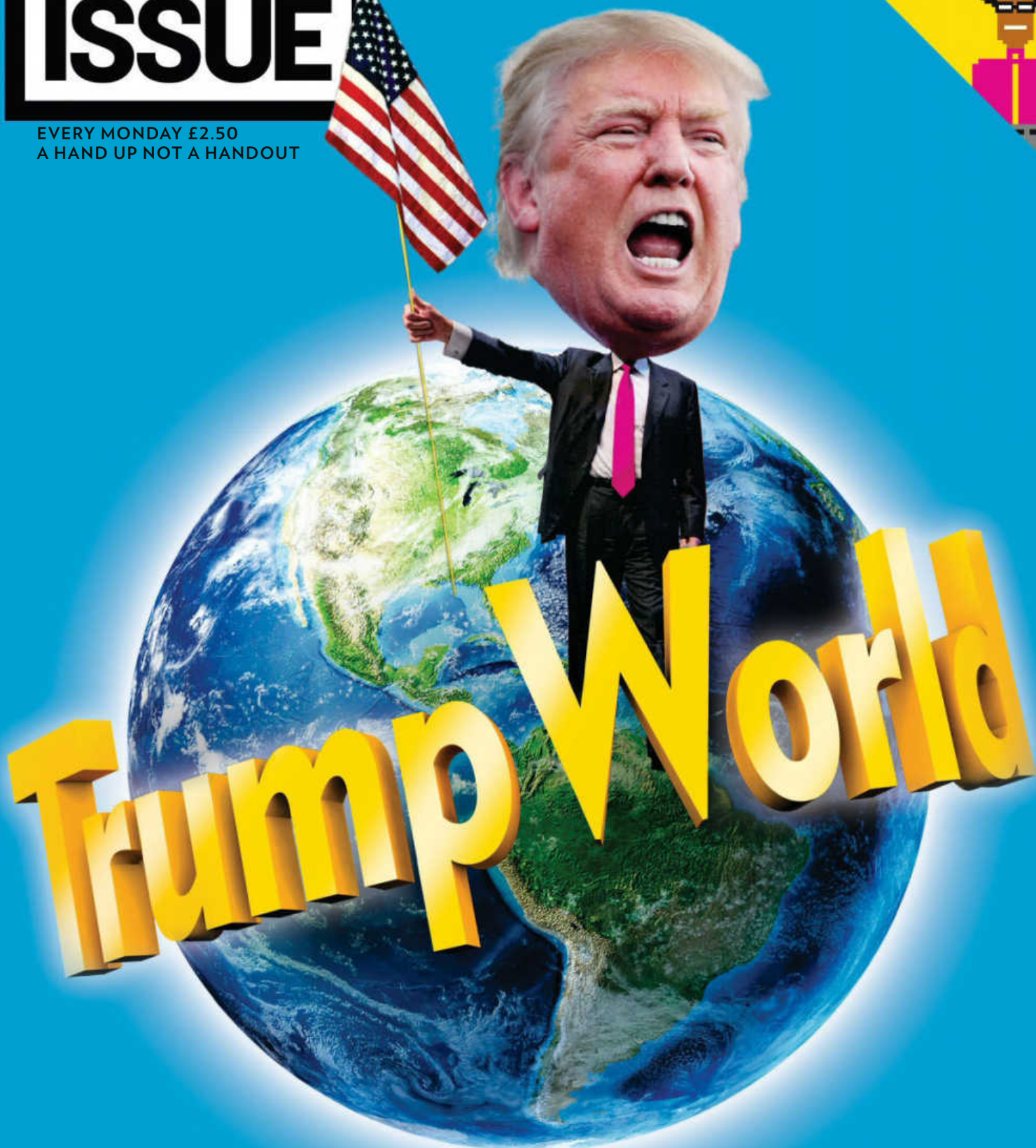
JANUARY 25-31, 2016 NO.1189

THE BIG ISSUE

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A HAND UP NOT A HANDOUT

THE IT CROWD
10 YEARS ON

Page 24



What Donald's not saying about the enemy within

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NO. 1189

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Hello, my name is Josh.

Since starting with The Big Issue I've found a sense of purpose. I'm looking forward with hope. One customer said she'd help me get my CV together. Having a good attitude is important, and I seem to get along with people much better these days... Read more of my story on page 46.



OUR MANIFESTO

● WE BELIEVE
in a hand up,
not a handout...

Which is why our sellers BUY every copy of the magazine from us for £1.25 and sell it on to you for £2.50. In this way we have helped hundreds of thousands of people to take control of their lives since 1991, and in the process created a global blueprint for social change.

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● WE BELIEVE
in the right to citizenship...
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● WE BELIEVE
in prevention...
Which is why Big Issue Invest offers backing and investments between £50,000–£1.75m to social enterprises, charities and businesses which deliver social value to communities.



CORRESPONDENCE

Fill 'Em Up

I agreed with the article [Jan 11-17] saying empty houses should be made available – or even garages – for people who don't get into or like hostels. I suggest too that in certain places big cement tubes could help as dry places.
Helen Smiley, Britanny

So good I got two

The editorial on the 10,000 people in Britain [Jan 11-17] who still watch TV on black-and-white sets made me laugh out loud. I put a big smile on my face. I read it outdoors with Dudley the dog beside me, his chocolate brown and snowy white fur warmed by the winter sun. The bark of the bare trees set against the sky's blueness were Hockney-esque to my eye, with hints of hue from across the colour spectrum. I bought a second Big Issue from young Anna to place in the town centre church. Thank you.
Rob Thorburn, email

@hockeys shooter

Mum is happy to be able to read @BigIssue again after her cataract operation – she's 96 tomorrow.

Don't walk on by

I wanted to send a comment regarding a Big Issue vendor whose name I don't know but is based in Leicester city centre on New Walk. On Tuesday morning I was walking to work when I walked past him. He went out of his way to advise me there was an unsavoury man round the corner and I needed to be careful when walking past there. I became scared, which he noticed, and he offered to walk me to my building as the man was just opposite it. I just wanted to say a very big thank you to him for making me feel safe. There are very few people in this world who would make strangers feel safe and I feel it's something that needs to be recognised.
DP, Leicester

@baddabyng

I often buy The Big Issue but this interview with Bowie that Damien [Hirst] commissioned Jarvis [Cocker] to do in 1997 is esp good [Jan 18-24].

Write to: The Big Issue, Second Floor, 43 Bath St, Glasgow, G2 1HW

Email: letters@bigissue.com Comment: [bigissue.com](https://www.bigissue.com)

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COMMENT OF THE WEEK

Good medicine: staying healthy for the NHS

I was intrigued by John Bird's article [January 11-17]. Reading his account of his dialogue with this poor lady made me proud of every penny of tax myself, my father and my grandfather have paid. To see in black and white the real power and good of our NHS is breathtaking and should act as a serious reminder to us all of the value and importance of a health service that is free at the point of need and that is widely available regardless of an individual's financial wealth. A health service that sees no boundaries in terms of social class and worthiness, structures that infect our society in so many other areas. This person's story must urge us all to continue to fight for OUR NHS and to realise the catastrophic danger we face if we fail to do so. But, of course, the main focus of the article is to also suggest that those of us who are able must take care of our own health in order to relieve the burden on the NHS. There is certainly much truth in this, and perhaps as we head into 2016 we should pledge to do so. Could we go as far as to say it is our societal duty to take a certain amount of responsibility for our health in order to safeguard a largely publicly owned organisation? Is it our duty to our fellow tax payers to do so? Who knows? I would be interested to hear more people's views on this!

Ashley Cousins, email



THE BIG WEDDING

@dpcjewellery
Our lovely Park Street @bigissue vendor Jack came to choose wedding rings with Diana – such a sweet love story [Off the Grid, Jan 18-24].

@JodieAnderson

Great article in @BigIssue about reforming prisons [Jan 18-24]. Low Moss Prison pilot inmates' access to kids initiative, also helps reduce recidivism.

How I fared well

Today I purchased The Big Issue outside Sainsbury's on Barnes High Street. It's been a long time since I bought a copy. So long, in fact, that I handed over £1 and was surprised when I noticed it's now published weekly rather than monthly. Which got me thinking: why did I stop buying The Big Issue, particularly as homelessness in London has always concerned me?

When I got home, safe in my warm social housing flat, I remembered. I stopped buying The Big Issue around the time I became homeless myself. When I became very ill with anxiety, depression and PTSD and lost my well-paid job. That was in the late 1990s.

But I was a more fortunate one. My pensioner mother took me in so I was never on the streets. Also, within six months of sleeping on my mum's sofa, Richmond council moved me into a lovely social housing flat. I was given financial support, counselling and medication. I've never stopped feeling grateful for the support I got from the welfare state and the council.

I may have stopped to buy a copy this time, for the first time for nearly 15 years, out of sympathy for the lady with her sweet smile and modest manner. Standing patiently outside on a cold day.

Oh! The Big Issue is a jolly good read. But then again it always was.

Tracey Eva Edwards, Barnes

@BlakeyWillis

@BigIssue thanks to the Leamington Spa Parade vendor for selling me a copy despite not having the full amount. Great guy, I'll pay you back!

@David4Ernehale

@BigIssue seller: "£2.50, the smile is free". Me: "Yours or mine?" Shared laughs – good way to start the day

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THE EDITOR

Offer a hand up and the rest will follow



Illustration: Lauren Crow

The ongoing collapse of the British steel industry is bad. It's bad for the workers and bad for communities. Last week, as Tata steel announced another 1000 jobs cut, mostly in Port Talbot, the mood music was as familiar as it was dismal.

Voices of men at foundry gates who have been linked to the place for generations. People in ancillary jobs fearful for their future. Any number of the interviews across radio and TV could have been taken from any major factory, or mine or other place of industry or manufacturing that has been gutted over the last 40 years.

Why, goes the familiar question, does Britain not make anything any more? Why are we consumers rather than creators?

Part of it is clear. It's cheaper to produce some things elsewhere. There is no way round the fact that steel is cheaper from China, and that less of it is needed globally. There is no getting around the fact that much of the stuff we need in modern life is produced cheaper on the Indian sub-continent and in China. Doesn't make it right but it's a reality.

The question is also somewhat bogus. For a start, we do still make things. UK car production is at a 10-year high. Last year a record number of cars were exported from Britain. That's impressive.

Nor should we always glorify everything old-school industrial.

When England's last deep coal mine at Kellingley colliery closed a few weeks ago, there was earnest brow-furrowing about what this said about a once-great British industry.

Rarely was it pointed out that the

industry was long gone. Also, how many of those rhapsodising a more glorious, simpler past were also annoyed that China was powering their growth by belching out dirty coal smoke?

And the job of coal mining is hard, and dirty and in many cases life-shortening. The author and journalist Bernard Hare has written about how his father, a miner, took him down the pit when he was 10, frightening him so much he wanted to do ANYTHING except go down again. His father wanted more for his son. He wanted to nudge him towards social mobility.

As for being caught up in a culture of buying things we don't actually need, that has been around for a long time. Even Shakespeare was at it. In his will he left his wife their SECOND best bed. Billy TWO Beds! Showy!

And within the consumption society, there are reasons to be cheerful.

There is a BBC TV show on at the moment called *Phone Shop Idol*. It's brilliant. Think it offers an opportunity to shout at the TV and see the folk who try and sell you things you don't understand get their comeuppance? Think again. This is a joyous, funny celebration of people taking pride in their work, people trying hard to be the best they can. Somehow, you end up rooting for them all. There is a dignity in it that is hugely welcome and beyond Simon Cowell's wildest dreams.

Offer a little bit of a hand up, a chink of light, and the indomitability of the human spirit will grab hold.

@pauldmcnamee

OFF THE GRID...



NIGHT WALKERS WHO GO THE EXTRA MILE

A new video to publicise The Big Issue Foundation's Big London Night Walk has been released. It was made by Fudge Animation and features the familiar faces of some of our vendors, as well as James Bowen and Street Cat Bob. The Walk takes place on Friday, March 11 and promises to show the capital in a different light. It takes place over a route of around 12 miles that takes in both iconic sights and locations important to the work of The Big Issue and its vendors. Along the way vendors themselves will share their personal insights about their experiences on the streets. March across to bigissue.org.uk to register!

STREET PAPER TRAIL

Next week is #VendorWeek – an event organised by the International Network of Street Papers to celebrate the achievements of people who sell magazines like The Big Issue around the world. A total of 300,000 vendors have been given a hand up by selling street papers in the last 25 years. At any time there are 11,000 vendors selling one of more than 100 street papers, in Europe, America, Africa, Japan, Perth, Scotland, or Perth, Australia.

Look out for events across the country to recognise their work, including some notable names from business and entertainment having a go at selling the magazine. Last year Lauren Mayberry (right) from the band Chvrches wore the red tabard in Glasgow.



FROM THE VAULT... JANUARY 2001 NO. 442

Our cover stars U2 praise Tony Blair and the Pope, and respond to criticism about their politicking. Bono also tells us: "I'm the least hippy person. When people start tree-hugging, I'm out the door."



SARAH HYNDMAN

How to love fonts

When I left school my first job was to work for a sign-making company. I learned how to produce vinyl lettering, how to screen print logos and how to balance on ladders (in any weather), as I applied my carefully produced letters to panels of all shapes and sizes.

Working with the owners of the shops, I discovered there was a direct link between their personalities and the signs that were to become their voices to the world. I realised that every high street is a conversation, and that the lettering and type-faces combine to give a street its own individual dialect.

Today, when I travel, I find I can get lost looking at the signage in an unfamiliar city where unusual letterforms create new and exciting visual accents. I'm more likely to be found photographing the sign at the entrance of a tourist

attraction than photographing the attraction itself.

The combination of type-faces you see on the signage along the street reveals a great deal about a city, town or specific area. It reflects the social, economic and historical development of an area and creates its own, unique typographic DNA.

The influences of art nouveau can still be found on the signs of Paris, for example in the flowing letters of the Metro signs. This gives even the most prosaic words a decadent flamboyance and a roguish air.

By contrast, the more austere influences of mid-19th century modernism are reflected in the bold, geometric shapes of the letterforms sitting on top of New York buildings. To me, these share the larger-than-life, busy, no-frills-no-fuss personality of the city. But look closer at the individual signs, past the stereotypes, and you'll find a

combination of personalities as eclectic as any group of people.

I work in a studio in Dalston in east London, which is a vibrant area that has undergone dramatic change. The signs along the main road, Kingsland Road, reveal layers of history dating back to when it was a London outpost in the 1800s. Signs from the art deco cinemas have been preserved alongside the vernacular DIY signage of independent shops, and the faded 'ghostsigns' painted on brick. The lettering reflects the voices of the different communities who have made the area their home over the years. Next time you walk along a street, join me and look up at the signs, as everybody else is looking down at the gadgets in their hands.

Sarah Hyndman is a graphic designer and the author of *Why Fonts Matter*, which is out January 28 (Virgin Books, £16.99)

WHY I SHONE A SPOTLIGHT ON POLICE SPIES

KEFI CHADWICK,
PLAYWRIGHT

Secret, unregulated undercover units within Special Branch deployed officers to live among activists over 30 years, with the aim of destroying those campaigns. Officers had long-term relationships with activists in their undercover personas then vanished out of these women's lives – recalled after up to seven years undercover – leaving the women deeply traumatised. My play is the story of women involved, written with support and co-operation from a number of them – but the fact is, this could have been any of us. From the Green movement to social justice campaigners, anyone was fair game. The unmasking of Mark Kennedy by Green activists in Nottingham began the destruction of this abusive state machine. A group of women brought a court case against the Metropolitan Police, keeping up pressure until Theresa May announced the Pitchford inquiry last year.

We now believe police spied on thousands of people – anyone who had opinions they didn't agree with. There have been revelations, via Jenny Jones and whistleblower Sergeant David Williams, that Special Branch deleted files on their spying operations. The Met's decision last week to withdraw its defence against environmental campaigner Kate Wilson, who had a two-year relationship with an undercover officer, avoids the requirement for it to open its files on her case.

Special Branch has become deeply self-serving, determined to avoid transparency. Think you've not been spied on? Think you don't live in a police state? Think again.

Kefi Chadwick's play *Any Means Necessary* is at Nottingham Playhouse, February 5-20; nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk

● Tell us the issue you care about. [@bigissue](https://twitter.com/bigissue); editorial@bigissue.com

The background of the poster is a photograph of hikers silhouetted against a bright, hazy sky at sunrise or sunset. The hikers are ascending a rocky ridge, using trekking poles. The sky is filled with soft, glowing clouds. The overall tone is adventurous and inspiring.

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No.59

Folkestone Castle

CHERITON, KENT

Folkestone Castle once stood on a prominent spur overlooking Folkestone, with views along the Kent coastline and over the Channel Tunnel entrance at Cheriton. Known locally as Caesar's Camp, there is no evidence it was occupied in Roman times. In fact, the first fortification on the site was more likely built within 30 years of the Norman conquest.

The motte and bailey castle may not have stood for very long, and none of the stone structure remains. The ditches and banks were excavated in 1878 by renowned ethnologist and archaeologist, Augustus Pitt Rivers. It is considered by some to be



the first excavation of a medieval site in Britain using proper scientific methods. Pitt Rivers was noted for innovations in archaeological methodology and in the display of archaeological

and ethnological collections, focussing on everyday ethnographic objects. Some 22,000 artefacts owned by him became the founding collection at the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford University, while his collection from around Stonehenge forms the basis of The Salisbury Museum in Wiltshire.

The Pitt Rivers Museum collection has grown to around half a million archaeological and ethnographic objects.

OS Grid Reference: TR 214380

Get instructions and OS map for this walk (ID 1048) for free until February 7 at walkingworld.com. Use discount code HB5 to access more than 6,000 routes for just £15.



Share your photos of this Hidden Britain and ideas for others @bigissue; editorial@bigissue.com



FORWARD THINKING... Tree-free loo roll.

Trees are valuable and help the Earth breathe, yet millions are flushed down the toilet every year. Bamboo is invasive and reproduces prolifically, with some species growing over a metre in a day. Now they're being used to make tree-free toilet paper. An American company is cultivating plantations to make 100 per cent bamboo or sugar-cane loo roll, replacing trees completely. And if bamboo sounds a bit harsh, don't worry – it comes in an extra-soft variety.

MY
PECCADILLO



MARK THOMAS COMEDIAN

STONE CIRCLES

What I really like about stone circles is that mixture of mystery and adventure. I got obsessed when I started touring. I started looking for interesting things to visit between gigs and ended up visiting lots of stone circles. I'm not religious about them; I don't have any pagan belief.

I like them when they are slightly inaccessible, so you have to make an effort. But you get richly rewarded. And you see the landscape changing when you return. In the middle of winter it might be barren and bleak, a few months later they're surrounded by bluebells.



I love that you can wander around Callanish (above) on the Isle of Lewis and sit amongst them. In the summer I took sandwiches and a flask and did a five-hour walk on Dartmoor. Rows of standing stones go on for a mile. It is just you, the stones and the ponies. I only saw three other people. There is something beautiful about escaping where no one else is, with no phone signal; if you break your ankle you are fucked. I have visited Stonehenge a lot. During the equinox with a load of crusties it's huge fun. But the coach parties with audio guides can take the adventure out of it.

I have lots of photos of me hugging stones. And I have a great book by Aubrey Burl, which is now full of my notes. There are some circles I have not found – but that is okay. It's a challenge. You cheeky fuckers, I'm coming for you.

Mark Thomas: *Trespass*, touring from February 2; markthomasinfo.com



“I was nine or 10 when I explored the family farm in Africa. I got a motorbike and a rifle to protect myself.”

Mackenzie Crook

Team leader, pirate, detectorist

LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

At 16 I'd just joined the local youth theatre in Dartford and I was having this massive revelation; I'd found all these people I wanted to be friends with. I didn't have lots of friends at school, then suddenly I met all these like-minded people and I was in love with all of them. I didn't have a traumatic time at school but it was a very academic all boys' grammar and didn't have much interest in the arts. I'm in touch with no one from my school days but still in touch with about a dozen people from that youth theatre.

I was deeply into pop music. I loved Bros and I had the full-on look – Grolsch tops, DMs, spiky hair. It's really odd to think back on that part of my life but I refuse to be ashamed because it's obviously a big part of who I was then. I think perhaps I saw it as being alternative because everyone else in my school was into Pink Floyd or very serious rock. They were all trying to be different but ended up looking the same. I was the only one who really looked different, truly alternative. I haven't thought much about this but looking at it now – to be in an all boys' grammar school and claim that you love a girly boyband was quite a brave thing to do. Maybe I should take some pride from that, tell my younger self he should be more proud of himself.

I hadn't thought about acting until one day when, for some reason, a teacher at my school handed me a leaflet about the theatre. He wasn't a mentor or anything – I only have a vague memory of Mr James, this very old teacher – but I remember vividly him coming to find me to give me this leaflet. It's a mystery – he didn't know me that well but he must have seen something in me, I don't know what. If I could go back in time I'd go and find him and shake his hand. Looking back, that was a big turning point in my life. If I hadn't got that flier, would I be here now talking to you about acting?

One of my biggest regrets is not going to see Nirvana when I had the chance. I had tickets to their seminal gig at Reading festival in 1992. For some reason I can't remember, I didn't go. I assumed I would get another chance to see them. So I'd kick my younger self up the arse and tell him to get to Reading.

As a teenager I was certainly a worrier but isn't everyone? I wasn't especially deep – it was all about girls. At 16 I looked about 12 and that was a massive pain in the arse. I had no chance of getting a girlfriend of my own age and that was constantly on my mind, for years I think. I've got two sisters so girls were around but I was just the cute, funny kid.

If I wanted to impress my younger self I'd tell him I'd done two Broadway shows and runs in the West End. And had parts in big movies. I could drop names like Johnny Depp, Al Pacino, Steven Spielberg and he'd be amazed. And it would feel good to tell him.

The Office definitely changed my life. I've been working ever since. If it hadn't come along, how much longer would I have persevered? I didn't know what a

Clockwise from the top: as Gareth in *The Office*; Ragetti in *Pirates of the Caribbean*; alongside Toby Jones in *Detectorists*; with his wife, Lindsay, and their children, Scout Elizabeth and Jude Michael



phenomenon it would become but I knew as soon as I saw the script for the pilot that it was really important I got this part, and I worked really hard to get it. I could see Ricky [Gervais] and Stephen [Merchant] were going to be the next big thing. I know Gareth was originally imagined as a much more macho guy but I came along with my take on it and they decided to go with that instead. I had some great lines, like in the training session (in a 'trust exercise', Gareth is asked his ultimate fantasy and he says: "Two lesbians probably, sisters. I'm just watching."). And that moment when I leave the nightclub in the girl's sidecar. I remember Ricky phoning me up when they had just written that bit, all excited, and he described it to me and it became lots of people's favourite moment.

I'd tell my younger self to take my work seriously. There have been times when I've probably been quite lazy and got lucky. I think it was a long time before I took my work seriously and felt it was a proper skill rather than just mucking about. And I'd prepare myself for becoming a recognisable face. I'd rather not have to deal with that but I accept it as part of the job. I'd tell myself not to stare at the ground so much because now I have a bad neck.

I understand the phenomenon that is Game of Thrones but I haven't been to any of the conventions. I was only in five episodes as Orell, a small part. But it was incredible to join that family. It was the most gruelling, exhausting thing I'd ever done. I'm probably most proud of *Detectorists*, though [the BBC Four comedy about metal detectorists he writes, directs and stars in], because so much of me has gone into it. It's the first time I've created something by myself. It was hard to explain to other people what I was doing – on paper the idea doesn't leap off the page as the most exciting proposition. But I knew there was space for a low-key comedy with air in it.

I'd tell my younger self not to give myself a hard time about losing touch with people he's worked with. I tend to make these very intense relationships and friendships when I'm working on something. You find yourself away from home and you come to rely on someone, your new best friend, your soul mate, over the period of that job. Then when the job finishes you drift apart. I used to beat myself up about that but now I realise it's just the nature of the job.

If I could go back to any time in my life, I'd go back to when I was nine or 10 and we used to go and visit the family farm in what was then called Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Those were some of the most special times. Me and my cousin had this vast African farm to explore by ourselves. We were given free rein – we went fishing, we went camping down by the dam, we went to look for pythons, and we were given a motorbike and a rifle to protect ourselves. We had absolute freedom and complete trust. They were magical times.

Detectorists series one and two box-sets are out on DVD
Interview: Jane Graham @Janeannie

IN 1987, THE YEAR MACKENZIE CROOK TURNS 16... The Great Storm hits England and France, leaving at least 22 people dead / Prozac makes its debut in the US / Earth's population reaches five billion

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SCAN
TO
ACT

Spare me from angst-ridden poetry



This week Robert Burns night falls and all over the world people will be celebrating this Scots poet. The night usually involves drink, stomach linings and poetry. The stomach lining is normally cooked and stuffed with meat, served with neeps, and called haggis.

When I was young and discovered that, like me, Burns was a late January baby, I was pleased. And then discovered that Byron also came into the world at the end of January, I was even more pleased.

A tenuous link you might think: Burns, Byron and Bird; especially as, even when I devoted myself to writing the stuff, it was crap. But it was good enough to sustain me when it looked as if there was no earthly reason to celebrate the latter of the three.

Probably the most significant thing I did poetically was to be punched on the nose by the poet WS Graham; another Scot and one of the greatest poets in the post-Dylan Thomas period.

He took exception to my bragging manner at a pub and decided to be critical. I did not hit him back because wielding a pencil all day long does not develop the right muscles. We embraced later over a drink.

I used to go to poetry evenings but found that if you closed your eyes all poets seemed to sound the same. Pleading, hurt, misunderstood. I wished for poetry that either didn't sound as if Eton and Balliol had to be in your blood or your giro had just been stolen by your neighbour. Or that that unfeeling shite had left you at last.

Try Alice Oswald if you fall into a similar category as me and don't subscribe to what you might call the 'angst for the memory' school of poetry.

But I still believe that poets need a different voice among them. I am sure there are many. But woundedness needs to be varied for me to listen.

If Burns can serenade a mouse and celebrate the lifeblood of a flea more than 200 years ago, surely there's room for non self-based and self-obsessed poetry.

Try Gerard Manley Hopkins if you want a different beat. He pulls fireworks out of phrases. Or listen to Bertolt Brecht delivered at lightning speed, like the Eurostar on schedule.

I have myself returned to poetry because of the incredible success of one of my

poems. I decided to self-publish it, called *"Weedy, Weedy, Weedy"*, *The Gardener's Lament*, and got it printed on a tea towel.

Whoever has got a copy, hopefully utilised for its cup-drying properties as well as being read, has been most complimentary. With a friend's mother only the other day ordering another copy. That's about 15 gone out already.

(The poem and the tea towel do have a purpose, when properly marketed, to raise money for charities that use gardening for work training for people in need, whether physical or mental).

Recently poetry has come back, in that I have read an autobiography of the poet William Carlos Williams. He was an American poet but also a full-time family doctor. Fascinating, this idea that you can get poems out of cracked heads and dementia. But Williams does. And at the same time celebrate beautiful women, dancing and the natural world. His mate, though, was the towering poet Ezra Pound, who has just been brought down to earth by the third volume of his biography that I am just starting to read.

I cannot make head nor tail of him but I am interested in how bright people get caught up in politics like fascism, which in

the inter-war and war years he did. Pound *Sounds Profound!* might run the T-shirt. But as few read him it still is left as a possibility. Certainly his anti-Semitism seemed very run-of-the-mill. Nothing profound about that.

A long way from Dumfries and the plough boy made good; both with poets and women. And mice and fleas.

To buy tea towels and more visit:
shop.bigissue.com/collections/all

John Bird is the founder and Editor in Chief of The Big Issue. @johnbirdwords
john.bird@bigissue.com



The Bard of Ayrshire: a (lady's) man for a' that

**"If Burns
can serenade
a mouse and
celebrate
a flea, there's
room for non
self-obsessed
poetry"**



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The Oscars should reward talent, regardless of colour or creed



It was one of the most exciting and original nights out I've had at the theatre in years – Molière's 17th-century French satire, *Tartuffe*, about a swindling conman of a priest making fools of a degenerate aristocratic family, transposed to modern Atlanta and the world of gospel preachers and African-American millionaires. *A Wolf in Snakeskin Shoes* was very much playing on the ultra-rich world evoked in the smash-hit US TV show *Empire*. The audience in the London theatre that night happened to be mostly black. Which made it all the more noticeable when a group of four – two middle-class white couples in their 60s – didn't return after the interval. My (incidentally white) husband and I were bemused. The play had a superb cast and staging and the most exquisite writing by Marcus Gardley. Those couples may not have loved it but we couldn't work out why they wouldn't have stayed to the end. We came to the one conclusion – they must have felt this isn't for or about 'us'.

That experience has come back to mind as I watch the Oscar whitewash row deepen since the 2016 nominations were announced. Whole strata of modern life – popular music, civil war in Africa, the excitement and drama of sport, lesbian identity, black masculinity – were virtually ignored in favour of costumed white period pieces, some of which received many mediocre reviews. *Straight Outta Compton*, *Beasts of No Nation*, *Concussion*, *Creed* and *Carol* aren't just 'worthy' films; they're outstanding in terms of critical acclaim and, crucially, proved big box-office hits.

The fact that their stars and writers and directors – such as Ryan Coogler, Michael B Jordan, Idris Elba and Todd Haynes – have won awards from other respected bodies made the comparison between that ageing audience walking out and the overwhelmingly over-60 white male demographic of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences seem more and more the logical explanation.

The Academy's reliance on nominations from existing members perpetuates an

appointing and rewarding-in-one's-image culture that has marked every institution battling discrimination. But it is the refusal of a persistent group of privileged people to accept that their world view is not a neutral 'norm', to keep rewarding safe, familiar material that stays in their comfort zone, and to regard other perspectives as 'minority', ones that does so much damage. What happened to celebrating great stories and the talented women and men who make them on the basis of their skill, not their background?

But this is not an angry column. I am inspired by *Creed* – which has only been nominated for Sylvester Stallone's supporting role as Rocky Balboa, training the son of his original rival. Strangely for someone

who can name three favourite Stallone films (*Cop Land*, *Demolition Man* and *The Specialist*, in which he and Sharon Stone get steamy in the shower), I had never seen any of the *Rocky* films before I saw *Creed*.

Rocky is now a melancholy poet of a man. Writer/director Ryan Coogler, who grew up watching *Rocky II* all the time with his dad, lovingly reimagined the whole plot arc of the original 1976 *Rocky* film and all the tropes – the training montage, the steps he runs up, the romance and especially the drama of the fight sequences, into which he injected such dynamism compared to the simpler original 40 years ago. It's a celebration of kind-hearted masculinity with a really distinctive lead performance by Michael B Jordan as Adonis, a young black man, the product of an adulterous affair, who regards himself as a 'mistake'.

When *Rocky* won Best Picture in 1977 Stallone was the outsider. His character has never been properly understood. In the 1990s his character John Rambo became a lazy shorthand symbol for militaristic neo-con arrogance. Yet Stallone is the man, I recently discovered, who stuck a joke about Rimbaud, the poet, into *The Expendables 2*. He also appreciates academic Susan Faludi's feminist analysis of Rambo and Reaganomics in her book *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*. This makes me feel more positive about his recent Warburtons ad, which I now see as a knowing riff on his on-screen personae rather than a cry for help.

Talented film-makers like Ryan Coogler are staying focused on making the best films they can. But personal endeavour alone isn't enough. Stallone needed Coogler to write him that comeback. And the Academy has to fix its unintentionally discriminatory ways to ensure a generation of deserving heavyweights get a fair fight in the ring.



Are stars like Michael B Jordan being given a fair fight?

“The whitewash row is deepening. Whole strata of life were ignored in favour of costumed white period pieces”

Samira Ahmed is a columnist for The Big Issue. She is a journalist and broadcaster. @SamiraAhmedUK

STREET ART



▲ MOON OVER DARK HORIZON

BY MONIQUE VAN AALST

Monique is from the Netherlands and now lives in Scotland. She has been homeless several times in her life. "It is quite an unsettling and life-changing experience," she says. "But I am a person who tries to make the best of a situation, whatever life throws at me. I use art as a way to express myself. This painting is made partly of tissue paper, and a friend of mine came up with the very poetic name."

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▲ TRIBE

BY SERENA

"I find clay incredibly tactile and cooling," says Serena, a member of the art group at 240 Project, a homeless charity. "It's a very magnetic medium to work with. I see many gentlemen contemplating at 240, and one day the clay just led me to making a man's head. I chose vibrant colours in order to bring energy to the face."

WHO AM I?

BY JASON PETCH

I am the bum on the City of Hull's street,
You just walked by,
I am the bum whose head followed
the floor,
Not in shame of who I am,
Because of the pain I felt,
I am the bum whose feet were blistered,
I am the bum whose inner thighs bled,
Through the cold and the dampness,
in which I survived,
I am the bum whose feet tonight died,
After a week,
Walking 74 miles,
Not searching for dreams,
Just surviving in life.

"In December I lost my job, my partner, my car, my children and ended up sleeping rough," says Jason. "The poem is exactly what I lived through. I have been published with two short stories and two poems in books written in America for a cancer charity. I am putting the finishing touches to a children's book about dragons, for which I have also done the illustrations."

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Instead of marking out asylum seekers, we should let refugees find work, says the IMF



ANALYSIS / ADAM FORREST

Work ethics: how refugees could boost the economy

Accommodating one million refugees in a single year is no easy task, even for a continent the size of Europe. In the first 10 months of last year, 995,000 first-time asylum applications were submitted to EU countries. And every day seems to offer another grim tale of culture clash.

In Denmark, MPs are debating whether to seize asylum claimants' valuables, while Danish nightclubs are banning new migrants by imposing language rules on the door. In Germany, the town of Bornheim banned asylum seekers from using its public pool for a few days. And here in the UK, the doors of houses used by asylum seekers in Middlesbrough are to be repainted after claims they were targeted for harassment because the colour red marked them out.

It's hard to be optimistic that the worst flashpoints are behind us, since national leaders and EU institutions appear to be overwhelmed by border issues. They are still struggling to work out where people go, on what basis you allow people to stay, and on what basis you try to stop more people coming in. The stakes are high. European Council President Donald Tusk has said the EU has "no more than two months" to tackle the migration crisis or the Schengen Agreement that allows free movement will collapse. European leaders have tended to

look at all this as a problem of legal structures. Perhaps they should focus on something else: money. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) offered Europe some interesting advice last week, saying refugees could help boost the continent's sluggish economic growth. The IMF's economists said the huge influx is likely to result in a "modest increase in GDP growth" in the short term, due to higher state spending on housing and benefits for asylum seekers.

This won't win over too many euro-sceptical hearts and minds. If you worry about your country spending money on foreigners, if you worry about how foreigners are going to fit in, you really don't care about how economists calculate gross domestic product. But the IMF has a more compelling long-term argument: let them work and we'll all stand to gain. "The sooner the refugees gain employment, the more they will help the public finances by paying income tax and social security contributions," its report stated. There are huge difficulties, of course. Governments do not want to do away with the asylum process, or erase the distinction between economic migration and political migration by those seeking safety. To do so gives authorities even less control over the way people move around. But Europe needs to get real. Huge numbers of new people are here. Huge numbers are on their way. The numbers are unprecedented in the post-war

era. The existing rules preventing people from working while making an asylum claim means large new communities are consigned to second-class, limbo status in Europe's cities, towns and villages. Unless rules are eased, or new, streamlined processes are introduced to make refugee status easier to obtain, Europe will be left with refugee ghettos permanently pepper-potted across the continent. Immense social problems will be inevitable.

Change is never easy. Even if rules are relaxed, countries are faced with managing skill gaps in some sectors, while other sectors will worry about the undercutting of wages. Then there is the support needed for training and education, quite aside from language barriers, housing provision and all the other potential sources of friction.

A certain kind of big-picture economist tends to ignore this. The big-picture economist always thinks about more people being a good thing, because more people are more units of economic activity. But people themselves don't think that way, or treat each other like that. Instead life is viewed, somewhat coldly, as a competition. Yet if we choose to exclude millions of people from joining the competition in Europe, things could get colder and nastier still.

@adamtomforrest



TRUMP AND THE ENEMY WITHIN

Ahead of the presidential primaries, billionaire businessman Donald Trump is warning voters that outsiders threaten the stability of the US. But his rhetoric exposes America's dark heart.

Words: Steven MacKenzie

The grandson of German immigrants, who also had a Scottish mother, has become the epicentre of an earthquake rocking America. Whether it is declaring that Mexicans are rapists or that all Muslims should be stopped from crossing the border, Donald Trump is exposing the rifts between the multicultural makeup of the country. But he is no renegade. His views are chiming with the ordinary Americans who pack out campaign rallies and wait with fervent bated breath for his next

outrageous statement. Trump has become the figurehead for anti-immigrant, anti-establishment sentiment – but he is just the strangely coiffed tip of the iceberg.

“We are definitely facing a backlash from racists against the changing demographics of the United States,” says Heidi Beirich. From her base in Montgomery, Alabama, Beirich leads a team at the Southern Poverty Law Center that has tasked itself with tracing and tracking extremists in the United States.

Photo: Getty



"Donald Trump put himself in our world for sure," Beirich says. "There is a direct correlation between his hate speech and people being harmed. We've already had two hate crimes – one against Latinos in Boston and one against a mosque in California – where it was Trump supporters who engaged in the violence."

The Southern Poverty Law Center was founded in 1971. At that time 'poverty law' was a specialist subject at universities for those who wanted to represent the poor and take on civil rights cases which tackled the inequality found in the laws of the land. One of the most dreadful incidents that happened during the civil rights movement was the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, which killed four young girls. Martin Luther King described the attack as "one of the most vicious and tragic crimes ever perpetrated against humanity", yet the organisation responsible, the United Klans of America, was still in operation in the 1980s. In 1981 they lynched 19-year-old Michael Donald in Mobile, Alabama. The individual perpetrators were tried and convicted but it was the SPLC, which sued the group for damages on behalf of Michael Donald's mother, that brought about

its demise. "The intent of the lawsuit was not about the United Klans of America having tonnes of money," Beirich says. "The point was we were going to take everything they had so they would be bankrupt and unable to function. We began suing hate groups out of existence, taking their property, shutting down their activities. Over the years we have sued and bankrupted 10 major racist organisations."

While working on the Donald case, the SPLC realised that nobody knew how many Klan chapters there were in the country, where they were or what they were doing. They started compiling lists of hate and anti-government groups, making the information available to law enforcement and the public.

The team is finalising its statistics for this year but are currently monitoring more than 1,600 extremist groups, whether they are the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, white nationalists, black separatists, neo-Confederates, racist skinheads, Radical Traditional Catholics, Christian Identity adherents, anti-LGBT groups or anti-government militias.

Of that number, 784 are hate groups. There are 142 neo-Nazi and 72 Ku Klux Klan groups. Two thirds of the total are white supremacists.

"The amount of hate groups is twice the number we had in the 1990s," Beirich says. "In the 1990s the number moved around a little but stayed between 400 to 500. That changed in the year 2000 when we saw a steady rise begin to emerge. We went to 602 hate groups in 2000 to over 1000 a few years later. That growth was spurred by the Census Bureau announcing in 2000 that by 2042 the United States would no longer have a white majority. If you're in a white supremacy group, that's scary to you, right? We saw that movement start to organise and add chapters."

Did the election of President Obama cause the numbers of racist groups to go up?

"I would say it added to it but the fact that the number of hate groups began rising at the start of George W Bush's administration shows that it was less about Obama and more about the fact that this country is changing, and very quickly."

Beirich explains that the definition of a hate group is one that attacks or maligns an entire group of people based on their inherent characteristics.

"TRUMP HAS TAKEN RACISM OUT OF THE CLOSET AND INTO THE MAINSTREAM. HE IS A THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES"

**HEIDI BEIRICH,
SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER**

"The Nation of Islam believe all whites, and the key words are 'all whites', are blue-eyed devils – inherently, the spawn of the devil – that's what gets you on the hate list. If you believe all Jews should be murdered,

that's gonna get you on the list. If you think all black people are stupid or criminal, you're going to get on the list. Obviously there's a black person who's a shitty human being, like there is a white person – but if you're saying everyone is that way, you get on our list."

Ryan Lenz, a former war correspondent who has reported from Iraq, now works for the SPLC and monitors the activities of hate groups.

"At this point in time there really is no typical day," he says, "given the number of ideologically motivated violent attacks, given the news cycle changing minute by minute and given that we have a major >

Republican candidate who has become a favourite figurehead of the white nationalist community. Every day is an interesting little trip down the rabbit hole into what these people think and believe.”

In the wake of the hacker group Anonymous leaking details of registered KKK members, individuals are increasingly not associating themselves with groups. “Instead, people are finding comfort in the anonymity of the web,” Lenz says. “They’ll become onlookers or lurkers and allow their interactions with similarly anonymous people online to define their ideology – to radicalise them in many respects. Dylann Roof stands accused of killing nine people in a church prayer meeting in South Carolina. His radicalisation came quite simply from a Google

search. He searched ‘black on white crime’ and found the website of the Council of Conservative Citizens, which compiles a list of crimes they allege demonstrates the savagery of American black men.”

The SPLC’s work is continuously informed by its location at the historic heart of the civil rights battle. “In the last century this place was the cradle of a movement to ensure that all people were granted the respect and the liberty they were afforded under the constitution,” Lenz says.

“That is a driving principle of everything we do here, to ensure equality and fair treatment for all. Working in a building where you look out the window and you see the church where Martin Luther King preached as a young man proves to be quite inspiring at times to motivate one to continue this work.”

As we speak, Lenz is keeping tabs on the situation in Oregon where an armed militia is occupying a wildlife refuge. In 2008, the SPLC had identified 140 anti-government groups. After Obama’s election they skyrocketed to more than 1000 in a very short space of time – the number always rises when Democrats are in office. The number of militias – anti-government groups who are well-armed and take part in training exercises, like that involved in the Oregon standoff – grew from 42 in 2008 to 334 in 2011. After a period of decline, the number of militias has risen again – by 37 per cent since 2014.

So why is a team in Alabama, and not US law enforcement, keeping track of 276 heavily armed militia groups? “After 9/11 the US was completely freaked out,” Beirich says. “We had 3,000 dead



Top: Ammon Bundy, leader of anti-government protesters, speaks to the media during a standoff in an Oregon wildlife refuge earlier this month. Bottom: Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan addresses the Justice or Else! rally on Washington’s Capitol Hill in October last year.



countrymen, it was terrifying. At the time the federal government was more concerned about domestic terrorism because of McVeigh’s bombing [in Oklahoma City] and several other plots. They had a task force to deal with these kinds of threats – the last time it was supposed to meet was on 11 September 2001. Well, obviously they didn’t meet that day and the government quickly refocused all of its resources and intelligence on Islamic extremism. White supremacists and anti-government groups were forgotten about.”

Furthermore, as Lenz explains, intelligence operations were damaged in the wake of an issue that will be familiar to viewers of the TV series *Homeland*. “In 2009, the Department of Homeland Security, which was the agency created after

9/11, released an alert saying they were fearful of radicalisation among returning veterans. There was a considerable political backlash and they let the unit tasked at looking at domestic terrorism versus Islamic or foreign-oriented terrorism fold into itself.”

“That was until about a year and a half ago,” Beirich says. “That changed largely as a result of the fact they have killed so many folks.”

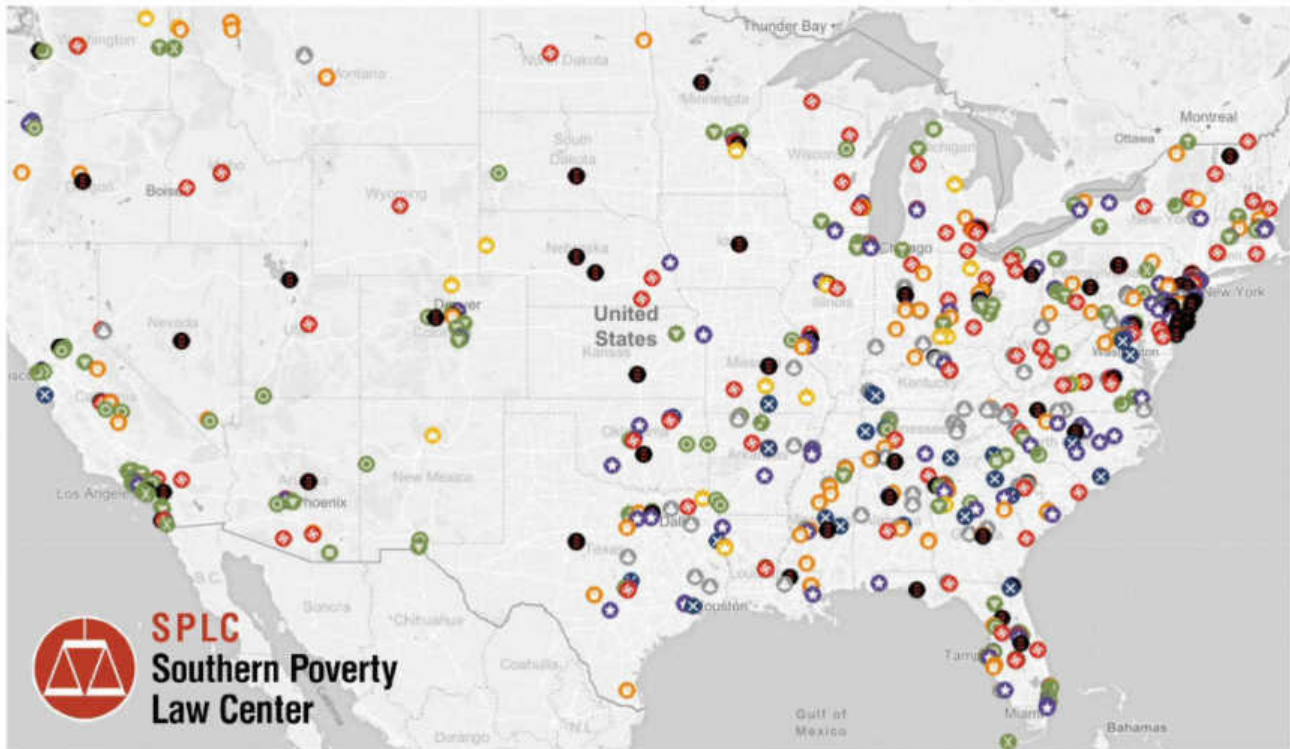
Between 2009 and 2015, the SPLC found that on average an ideological attack from the radical right was carried out or thwarted by law enforcement every 34 days. “There were 63 incidents and 56 people were killed,” Lenz says. “Islamic threats were quite minimal compared to threats from the anti-government movement and other elements of the hate movement in the United States.”

Yet top of the agenda as the presidential primaries begin is the threat from foreign enemies. This is familiar ground. Political discourse in America has long been accompanied by the notion, or paranoia, of an intruder infiltrating the system. Here is an extract from a *Harper’s Magazine* essay by Richard Hofstadter from 1964 called *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, which could be discussing the strategies of Trump: “He does not see social conflict as something to be mediated and compromised, in the manner of the working politician. Since what is at stake is always a conflict between absolute good and absolute evil, what is necessary is not compromise but the will to fight things out to a finish. The enemy must be totally eliminated – if not from the world, at least from the theatre of operations to which the paranoid directs his attention.”



WHO HATES WHO, AND WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

THERE ARE **784 HATE GROUPS** OPERATING ACROSS THE UNITED STATES



- | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Neo-Nazi | General hate | Anti-LGBT | Racist skinhead | Black Separatist |
| Anti-immigrant | Christian Identity | Neo-Confederate | Anti-Muslim | Radical Traditional Catholicism |
| Ku Klux Klan | Holocaust Denial | Racist music | White Nationalist | |

The essay points out that because the ambitions are unachievable, the sense of paranoia inevitably increases. “The paranoid mind is far more coherent than the real world,” Hofstadter writes, and that remains true today. For Trump, a black and white (preferably white), view of everything is easier to understand and sell to an electorate than the infinite complexities that exist in reality.

Although Trump is unlikely to be the next President of the United States, Beirich and Lenz at the SPLC believe that the damage is being done as long as his ideas are being oxygenated by the campaign.

“Donald Trump has done much to energise the [radical right] movement and give them the feeling of political legitimacy,” Lenz says. “I wish I could get inside his mind and understand exactly what he believes and why he believes it. There is the argument that he’s pandering to a political electorate – he could just be a racist! But I couldn’t say that definitively...”

“Donald Trump has taken racism out of the closet where it belongs and put it in the mainstream,” Beirich adds. “He is a threat to the United States. It’s one thing to know there are a bunch of young white angry racist

males – it’s another thing to tell them they’re right and embolden them! Donald Trump is a disaster for the Republican Party and a disaster for the country.

“We are going to go through stresses and strains as the country adjusts to what is definitely coming down the pipeline – whether people like it or not – which is a multicultural, multi-ethnic nation. This is not the first time we have been through these things. At the turn of the 20th century there was a lot of tension over Irish and Italian immigrants, most of whom were seen as non-white at the time – the irony, right? We eventually passed a flat-out racist immigration law in 1924 that restricted immigration to ‘Nordics’, so we’ve gone through these changes before.

“It’s not all doom and gloom,” Beirich concludes. “It’s doom and gloom at the same time of great hope. I am optimistic because young people are very tolerant, and they’re the largest group in America. They’re the future.” **TBI**

Welcome to Leith, a documentary about the attempts to create a white-only enclave in North Dakota, in which the SPLC’s work is featured, is released on February 12

THEY INVENTED THE INTERNET

A decade ago an offbeat show landed on Channel 4, single-handedly capturing our tech confusion and giving the sitcom format a reboot.

Eamonn Forde joins the crowd

In February 2006, YouTube had only been going 12 months, Facebook was still mainly for colleges, Twitter was a month from being founded, Spotify was still at the idea stage and the iPhone was over a year away.

Today we take all these things for granted but back then we were hugely mistrustful of how digital technology was encroaching on our lives.

With impeccable timing, into this moment of transition arrived *The IT Crowd*, on Channel 4, Graham Linehan's comedy about a maladjusted computer support team. It was not quite the ratings success of *Father Ted*, the show Linehan co-wrote a decade earlier, but its central cast, apart from Katherine Parkinson (Jen), began as relative unknowns and were stars by the end – notably Chris O'Dowd (Roy), Richard Ayoade (Moss) and Matt Berry (Douglas). It

perfectly captured the moment where computers stopped being something for work and began to dominate leisure time. "Its only legacy is that it got Chris O'Dowd famous," Linehan sardonically decrees – but looking back at it now, it is striking how prescient it was and, surprisingly, how bamboozled by technology many of us remain.

Remarkably, it nearly wasn't going to be about IT at all. Linehan, wanting to write a show as

a vehicle for Ayoade, whom he had seen in another Channel 4 comedy, *Garth Marenghi's Darkplace*, originally based it on travel agents.

"I had an image of a guy sitting with a lot of palm trees around him but never able to get out of his own boring life," says Linehan, revealing he only got a few lines into a draft script before abandoning it. "I realised quite quickly that I had absolutely no interest in the subject."

Instead he pinpointed a cultural and technological shift that was happening, whereby IT experts had become a neo-clergy in thick-frame glasses. "Computers are a bit of a mystery to most people and I always think that when something is a bit of a mystery to someone then there are comic possibilities there," Linehan says. "That was how we felt with *Father Ted* and Catholicism. We were able to just make up loads of nonsense about the Church simply because it's a closed book."

Linehan's pitch for the show to Channel 4 was that it was "a kind of *Upstairs, Downstairs* thing" with "the beautiful people being upstairs and the drones being downstairs" in the basement. He accepts now that this constrained the possibilities of what the show could do. "It kept the characters away from all the action and it meant it was very difficult to get stories going," he says. "People would have to have a good reason to come down into the basement. That is one thing I wish I was able to go back and change."

An open casting was held to fill the other lead roles. "Matt Berry was originally my choice for the character of Denholm [Reynholm, head of the company where the show is based]. He couldn't do it so Chris



Confused:
Graham Linehan



Four's a crowd, L-R: Katherine Parkinson as Jen Barber, Matt Berry as Douglas Reynholm, Chris O'Dowd as Roy Trenneman and (front) Richard Ayoade as Maurice Moss

Morris, with about a week to go, agreed to step in and do the character," says Linehan. "It turned a negative into a positive because we were able to get a much richer storyline going from him killing himself [by jumping out of the top-floor window] and Matt taking his place [as his nephew Douglas from series two]."

O'Dowd had, by his own admission, "done very little" acting before finding himself going to two castings on the same day. One was for *Extras*, Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant's first show after *The Office*. The other was *The IT Crowd*. "It was a little tricky at the start as Graham wasn't terribly keen on a Paddy playing the lead," says O'Dowd. "With *Black Books* and *Ted*, it had been lead Irish characters. I guess he didn't want to feel he was repeating himself."

Linehan adds: "Chris came in and he was so good. I thought I'd be in trouble with the Race Relations Board if I didn't hire him as he was obviously the best man for the job."

While Gervais and Merchant missed out on O'Dowd, they ended up being a counter-intuitive influence without realising it. Linehan had conceived *The IT Crowd* as a studio-based sitcom at a time when other comedies were trying to slipstream the faux-documentary style of *The Office*. Apart from *The Thick of It*, Linehan feels everyone else chasing that stylistic trend found themselves coming up short.

"It's one of those things where everyone thinks it looks easy," he argues. "Get a shaky camera and get people to pretend they are improvising and you'll get comedy gold."

Another sign of just how tight every bolt in the show had to be is apparent in the theme tune, written by Neil Hannon of *The Divine Comedy*, who also did the theme for *Father Ted*. "I think possibly 17 or 18 attempts later, we got to something Graham wanted," he sighs. "It seemed to go on for months."

The theme tune ended up being an electronic instrumental not dissimilar to Are 'Friends' Electric? by Gary Numan ("They are different notes!" avers Hannon) but the starting point was a clip of children on a bus that Linehan found online with "an insanely happy '70s theme tune".

Hannon also wrote two songs within the show, both based on lyrics Linehan had provided. The first was for a sketch about the new emergency services number ("0118 999 881 999 119 725... 3").

"Graham wanted a parody of chatline numbers you get at 1am on Living TV," explains Hannon. "He gave me the numbers in advance but it was my idea to have a gap before the '3' at the end. That came as an after-thought."

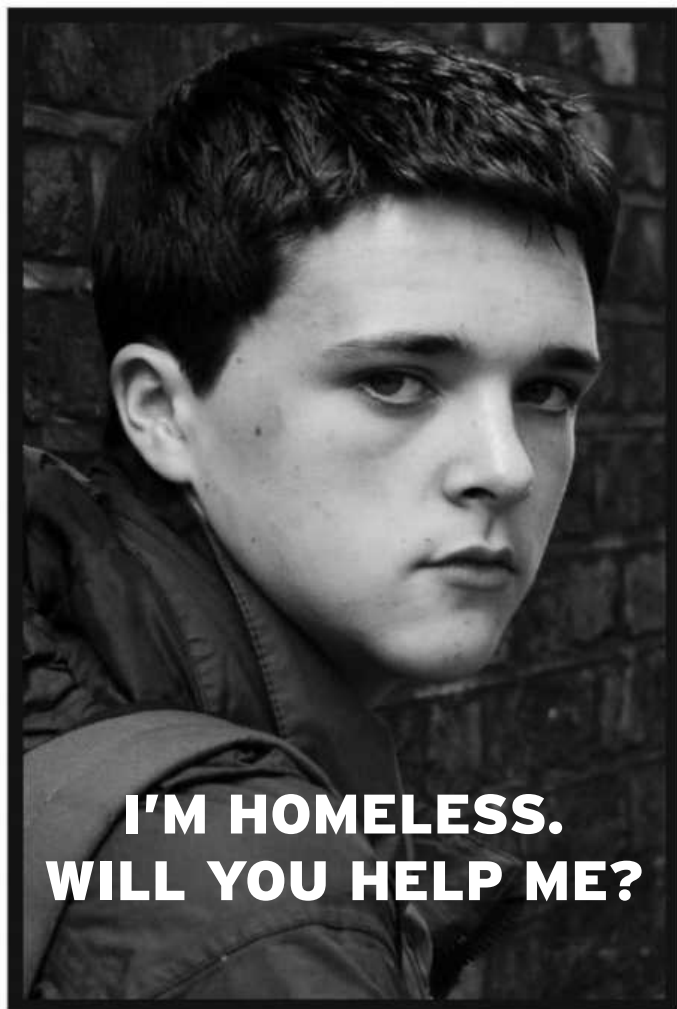
He also did the music for the Small Paul episode, where the 4' 11" office post deliverer gave Jen a push >



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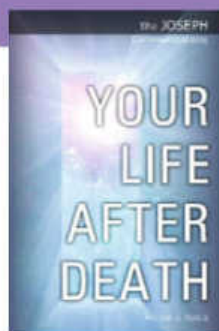
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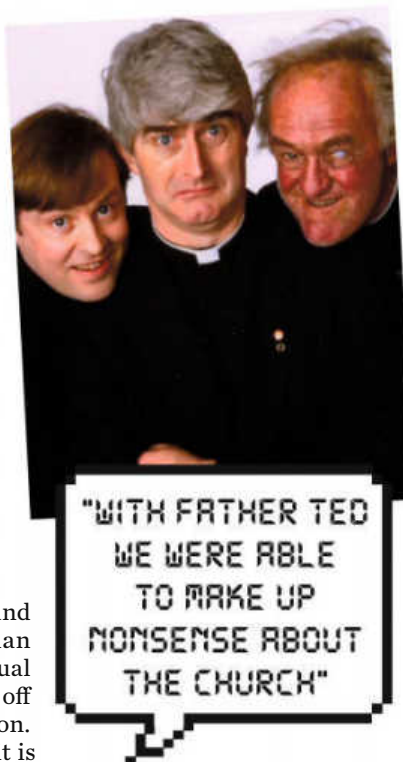
on his mail trolley but over-exerted himself and died of a heart attack. Denholm Reynholm organised for his friend, Elton John, to write a musical eulogy to the much-loved office worker, and Hannon was tasked with creating a song in that style. “The humour is always in how believable it is, as you have to play it as straight as humanly possible, never giving an inch,” he says of writing a pastiche. “But I am always provided with great lyrics from Graham. Small Paul you’re gone now / You pushed that trolley a little too hard / You felt the twinge, it was your heart / And you’re dead now.”

“Hah hah! You can’t go wrong!”

The show ran for four series, and a fifth was planned, with Linehan recruiting contributors for a “virtual writers’ room” to lift the pressure off him – but nothing came to fruition. “I got some funny people in but it is sometimes hard to communicate your vision to other people,” he says. “‘Vision’ is such a bloody pompous word but you know what I mean.”

One ‘lost’ episode involved Jen buying live lobsters for a dinner party, storing them in the bath at home but returning after work to find them gone. “It cuts to her in bed with the cover up around her and you hear the chitter-chattering as the lobsters are somewhere in the house,” laughs Linehan. “Roy and Moss come in and it’s a kind of a parody of *Alien* and had a really nice ending. It was a shame that one didn’t get done.”

Something that did get done, much to Linehan’s chagrin, was a US pilot, featuring an all-American cast



apart from Ayoade reprising his role as Moss. “No one had told me about it,” huffs Linehan. “I would call it ventriloquism, where they were trying to do an impression of a UK-style show. It just didn’t work as the Americans don’t do surrealism in that same way – especially in front of studio audiences.”

While Linehan is still noticeably raw, Ayoade is more circumspect in his take. “I was just an actor in it,” he says, seeking to downplay it somewhat. “It’s like with a theatre production where you have a London cast and then they move to Bristol and some people stay in the cast and some people have got other jobs. To me the thing that was most interesting about shooting it is that it was shot on the same stage as *Citizen Kane*.”

There was also a German version but it reinforced Linehan’s argument that simply transplanting a

comedy into another country is doomed. “You can’t just go in and vaguely copy the same show,” he says. “You have got to reinvent it. Sometimes it didn’t even work the first time, so why try and do it again?”

Accepting it will always be in the shadow of *Father Ted*, he says that is partly to do with internal dynamics. On Craggy Island, Fathers Ted, Dougal and Jack (and Mrs Doyle) operated like a dysfunctional family, while Roy, Moss and Jen were simply co-workers. This is an important distinction for the audience. “That’s possibly a reason why it didn’t have the same impact as *Ted*, in terms of popularity,” he says. “When you create a family on-screen, it’s very attractive to people. They love seeing families reflected back to them.”

Since *The IT Crowd*, O’Dowd has appeared in Hollywood films *Bridesmaids* and *St. Vincent* and become internationally famous. But *The IT Crowd* is something he can’t completely escape, exacerbated by the fact his character had the closest the show had to a catchphrase (“Have you tried turning it off and on again?”), even though it was relatively shortlived and killed off when it began to feel rote.

“I still get it on Twitter, I’d say, a couple of times a day,” sighs O’Dowd. “If I ever go into the Apple Store now you can tell that there is a hubbub around those T-shirted militia [the staff] as they decide who is going to come to me and say that line first.”

A decade on, Ayoade is hesitant to blow the show’s trumpet too hard. “‘Legacy’ sounds awful,” he says. “It sounds like something a politician would trot out.”

Linehan suggests its influence has been reviving a format some saw as archaic. “The thing I hope whenever I do a studio sitcom,” he says, “is that it puts an end to the nonsense that there is something old-fashioned about studio sitcoms.”

O’Dowd concurs. “Maybe it brought the sitcom back from the dead a bit,” he says. I then ask him if there is anything about the show that the audience doesn’t know or realise. “Graham made me perform sexual acts on him to get the job,” he mock-wails, hinting at the dark cost of his Faustian pact with fame. “But I kept doing it even after I got the job, as I enjoyed it so much.” **TB**

HAVE YOU TRIED TURNING IT OFF AND ON AGAIN?

The Big Issue’s IT guru **Bav Puar** tells you what to do if your computer is *actually* acting up

1 When trouble-shooting, eliminate the basics, check all connections are attached securely and the power is on.

2 Use the log files to help find the issue. If they seem meaningless, and at times they can be, Google for an interpretation.

3 Be methodical. Troubleshooting is often a process of elimination.

4 Take preventative measures. Install anti-virus software and delete old files.

5 Use secure passwords and try not to have the same password for all accounts.

6 If all else fails turn it off and on, sometimes there really is no other option.



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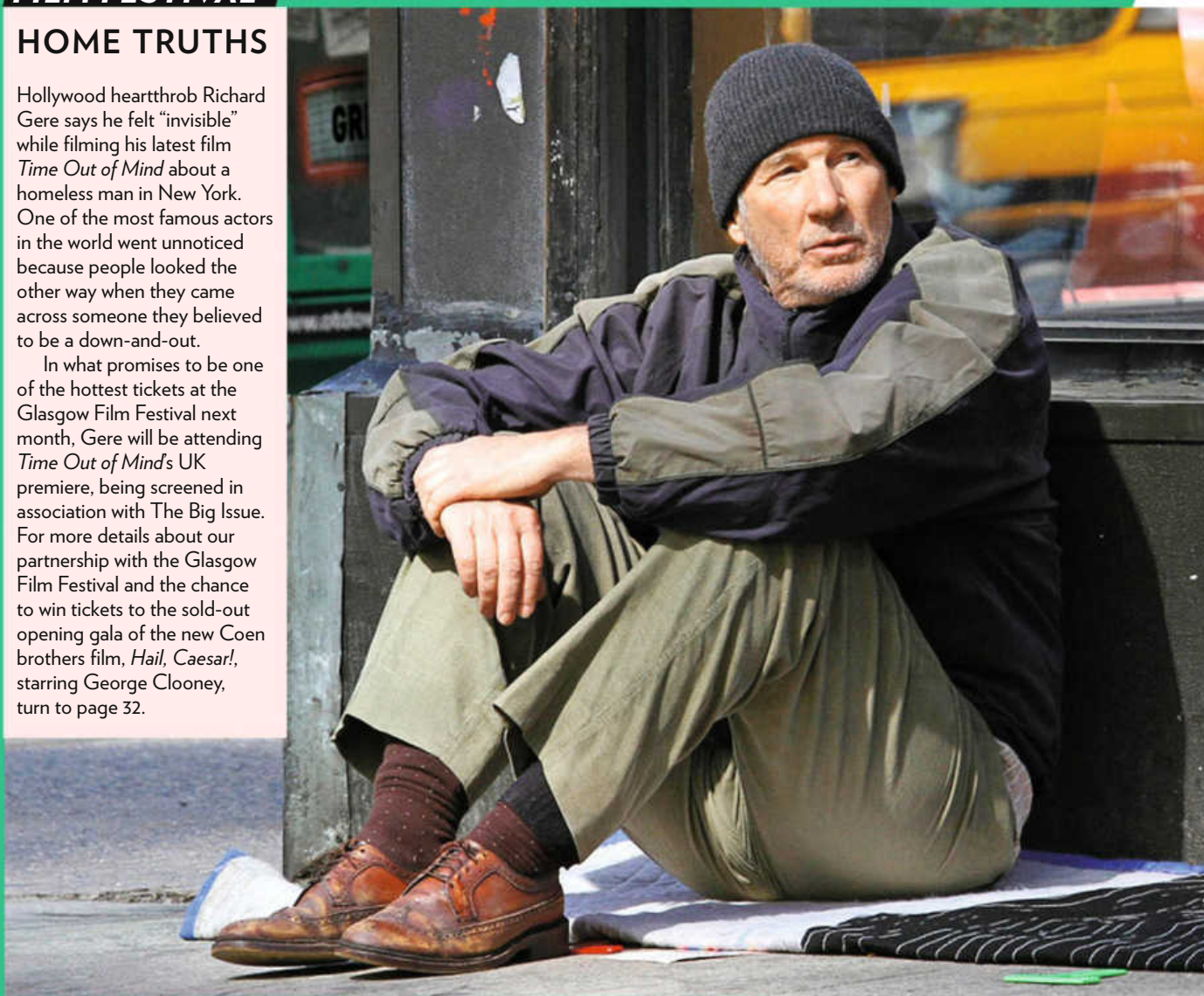
BOOKS/FILM/TV/MUSIC/GEEK

FILM FESTIVAL

HOME TRUTHS

Hollywood heartthrob Richard Gere says he felt “invisible” while filming his latest film *Time Out of Mind* about a homeless man in New York. One of the most famous actors in the world went unnoticed because people looked the other way when they came across someone they believed to be a down-and-out.

In what promises to be one of the hottest tickets at the Glasgow Film Festival next month, Gere will be attending *Time Out of Mind*'s UK premiere, being screened in association with The Big Issue. For more details about our partnership with the Glasgow Film Festival and the chance to win tickets to the sold-out opening gala of the new Coen brothers film, *Hail, Caesar!*, starring George Clooney, turn to page 32.



BOOKS



Agatha Christie believed if something could happen – even once – then it was plausible

AUTHOR FEATURE

Mysterious ways

When a plot spins on its head and the ‘impossible’ becomes possible, crime fiction is doing its job, says **Sophie Hannah**

I have been obsessed with mysteries for as long as I can remember. First there was my friend’s dubious boyfriend, who swore he was lead guitarist in an allegedly successful band that appeared not to exist, and had a string of entirely made-up tour dates (yes, I investigated!).

Then there was the family friend who failed to secure her home against intruders, and then one night burglars broke in and did unspeakable things to her before making off with her jewellery; I was told this story several times, to ensure that I would not grow up to be cavalier about window locks, but I wasn’t allowed to know who the victim was. I spent my teenage years looking at all my parents’ female friends, wondering – was it you?

Best of all was the recurring psychological mystery of ‘If you don’t know what you’ve done, I’m not going to tell you’. Like everyone else, I’ve had that said to me many times, and I’ve always found it a compelling puzzle at both ends – my unknown crime and my accuser’s bizarre response. If I don’t know, then you’re not going to tell me? Er... why not? (I was thrilled to solve that mystery at the age of 38, and I’m happy to share the solution with you: you’ve probably done nothing wrong, and you’re being

manipulated by an emotional terrorist.) All this real-life mystery experience explains why, when it comes to fiction, I like my mysteries to be doubly, trebly, extra-extra mysterious, so that they beat real life – that, after all, is the job of fiction. As a hardened suspense addict, I find a mild dose simply doesn’t hit the spot. A crime novel that starts with a detective being called to a murder scene doesn’t do much for me. The moment we encounter the dead body, the mystery is almost solved. We don’t know who killed the victim or why but we can assume someone did it because they hated or feared that person, and after that it’s just a question of filling in the details.

My favourite sort of mystery is the Agatha Christie sort. Christie specialised in puzzle-based stories that, crucially, contained an element that appeared at first glance to be completely impossible – and yet there it was, waiting to be explained. In *And Then There Were None*, it seems that no one can be the murderer because all present are dead – killed, one by one, with nobody left to be the killer. In *Murder on the Orient Express*, the victim must have been stabbed by a fellow passenger in the same carriage but

that seems impossible because everybody has a solid alibi provided by at least one other person. When the apparently impossible is rendered brilliantly and shockingly possible simply by looking at things from a different angle – one that, somehow, the reader fails to think of – that’s when mystery fiction is doing all that it should.

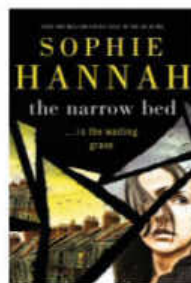
I hope I practise what I preach: my latest crime novel, *The Narrow Bed*, is the story of Kim Tribbeck, a stand-up comedian who discovers she has been targeted by the serial killer Billy Dead Mates. Billy’s modus operandi is to kill pairs of best friends but Kim trusts no one and has no friends at all – so how and why can she have been targeted by Billy?

Before *The Narrow Bed* I wrote *A Game for All the Family*, in which the heroine, Justine, complains to the headmistress about the unfair expulsion of her daughter’s best friend, George Donbavand. George did not steal the coat he is accused of stealing, Justine protests to the head – only to be told by the head and all the teachers that George has not been expelled, was never at the school in the first place, and does not, in fact, exist. Yet Justine’s distraught teenage daughter insists that George is real, and loves him passionately.

Two years ago I wrote *The Monogram Murders*, which is a Poirot novel – the first since Agatha Christie’s death, written with the blessing of her family – and was asked by journalists and readers alike, ‘Wasn’t it difficult to write an Agatha Christie-style novel?’ Well no, it wasn’t – or at least, no more difficult than writing a Sophie Hannah-style novel. True, I was writing in the voice of a 1929 London policeman and not a contemporary woman-in-peril

– but writing *The Monogram Murders* made me realise the extent to which I had internalised Christie’s storytelling priorities and her penchant for the apparently impossible turning out to be possible, as well as her philosophy of plausibility, which seems to be – if it could happen only once, and in the most extraordinary circumstances, then it’s plausible.

Which leads neatly to my recipe for the perfect crime novel: only this precise story, in all its detail, makes anything in this story possible.



Sophie Hannah’s novel *The Narrow Bed* is out on February 11 (Hodder and Stoughton, £14.99)



5 BOOKS WITH FABULOUS GIRLS WILL MABBITT

1. SOPHIE, THE BFG Roald Dahl

"I think you speak beautifully!" The BFG gets the best lines but it's Sophie who saves the day. She's smart, brave and polite, showing you don't need superpowers to be a hero.

2. LYRA, HIS DARK MATERIALS Philip Pullman

"But if you must and you can, there's no excuse." Like Sophie, Lyra is completely believable. She outwits older, more powerful adversaries with her enviable cunning but never compromises her principles. The perfect hero.

3. ANNE SHIRLEY, ANNE OF GREEN GABLES

Lucy Maud Montgomery "There's such a lot of different Annes in me. I sometimes think that is why I'm such a troublesome person." Matthew and Marilla wanted a boy but got Anne. She changed their lives without changing herself to fit their preconceptions of how a girl should be.

4. LAURA INGALLS WILDER, LITTLE HOUSE SERIES Laura Ingalls Wilder

So what that Laura liked a bit of cross-stitch? Anyone who survives locusts, malaria, blizzards, scarlet fever and much more deserves to be on this list. Just don't watch the TV adaptation.

5. MABEL JONES, THE UNLIKELY ADVENTURES OF MABEL JONES

"My name is Mabel Jones and I'm not afraid of anything". I'm not sure who it's by... but *The Unlikely Adventures of Mabel Jones* is the greatest book ever written and you should definitely buy a copy as soon as possible.

Mabel Jones and the Forbidden City by Will Mabbitt is out now (Puffin, £6.99)



REVIEWS

DINOSAURS ON OTHER PLANETS / SHAME AND WONDER

Pulling at the harp strings

We all know that the Irish have a gift for storytelling, the kiss of the Blarney Stone and all that, but even by those normally high standards, something remarkable is happening in the current literary scene in Ireland.

Writers like Kevin Barry and Colin Barrett are picking up international prizes and acclaim, and the latest young writer to burst on to the scene is Danielle McLaughlin, whose debut collection of short stories, *Dinosaurs on Other Planets*, comes accompanied with a wealth of plaudits from around the globe.

Some of these 11 precise, delicate stories have appeared already in print, in the *New Yorker*, *The Irish Times* and the seminal Irish literary magazine *The Stinging Fly*, and the back cover comes with a rave from none other than Anne Enright.

So, does it live up to the hype? Indeed it does. These are incredibly accomplished stories – 11 tales set mostly in rural Ireland – that deal with universal themes of love, loss and quiet desperation. There is something of Richard Yates or John Cheever about some of the desolate lives depicted within these pages, women and men stuck in impossible relationships but seemingly unable to extricate themselves with their sanity intact.

The disconnection and alienation keep coming – mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, possible lovers – each of them struggling with the million tiny defeats of everyday life, balanced by only the occasional slim victory. And that's the key to McLaughlin's stories, she focuses on the seemingly insignificant, the everyday details that go on to represent bigger things. There is no melodrama here, just the vital elements of living. This crystallises best in the gently terrifying *Along the Heron-Studded River*, in which



Illustration: Dom McKenzie

a man commutes to work but becomes increasingly worried about his wife's mental health back at home, as well as the safety of their infant daughter. It is tense, taut storytelling at its best, nerve-shredding yet somehow simple in its execution. McLaughlin is yet another fantastic new addition to Ireland's burgeoning literary establishment.

We switch from fiction to essays next but the focus on the small, crucial moments of life links both books. David Searcy's *Shame and Wonder* is a collection of 21 freewheeling flights of fancy, many of them sprouting from seemingly insignificant observations of everyday things – reading a

cereal box over breakfast, shopping for a new car online, looking at a desk – and spiralling out to look at the world anew.

Searcy links his observations to ideas about the formative nature of childhood, the purpose of art and religion, the hope embedded in the idea of future, and all sorts of things in between – but he attacks such big ideas in an irreverent and continually questioning way, the writer keeping his sense of awe intact and engaging. And he's funny too, self-deprecating and well aware of his own idiosyncrasies and foibles as an older man stuck in a world that seems to be constantly bamboozling him with its relentless march towards some uncertain future.

Searcy came late to non-fiction writing, having apparently previously penned a handful of horror novels. Either way, his style is unique and distinct, eschewing the precise structuring of more formal essayists, preferring to let his mind wander wherever it wants, and letting his skill as a prose stylist drag the reader along for the ride. Sterling stuff.



Dinosaurs on Other Planets

Danielle McLaughlin, hardback
John Murray, £14.99

Shame and Wonder

David Searcy, hardback
William Heinemann, £16.99

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WIN!

VIP TRIP TO GLASGOW FILM FESTIVAL GALA OPENING, PLUS AFTER PARTY AND HOTEL



With George Clooney, Richard Gere and Roald Dahl leading a stellar line-up, here's how readers can be part of the Glasgow Film Festival fun

This year's Glasgow Film Festival promises to be the glitziest and most glamorous yet, with 308 events taking place across the city next month, including 60 UK premieres. As an official media partner, The Big Issue has teamed up with the festival for several special screenings.

One of the hottest tickets will be for our showing of *Time Out of Mind*, in which Richard Gere plays a homeless man in New York. The star will be jetting in to attend the event. Another of our films, *16 Years Till Summer* is a thoughtful and profound documentary about a prisoner returning to the Scottish Highlands after a long-term sentence to nurse his sick father. And for something completely different,

a family-focused day of Roald Dahl activities including workshops and screenings of *Matilda* and *Fantastic Mr Fox* will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the author's birth.

We will be giving away tickets to lucky readers throughout the Festival so make sure to follow @BigIssue on Twitter or like BigIssueUK on Facebook.

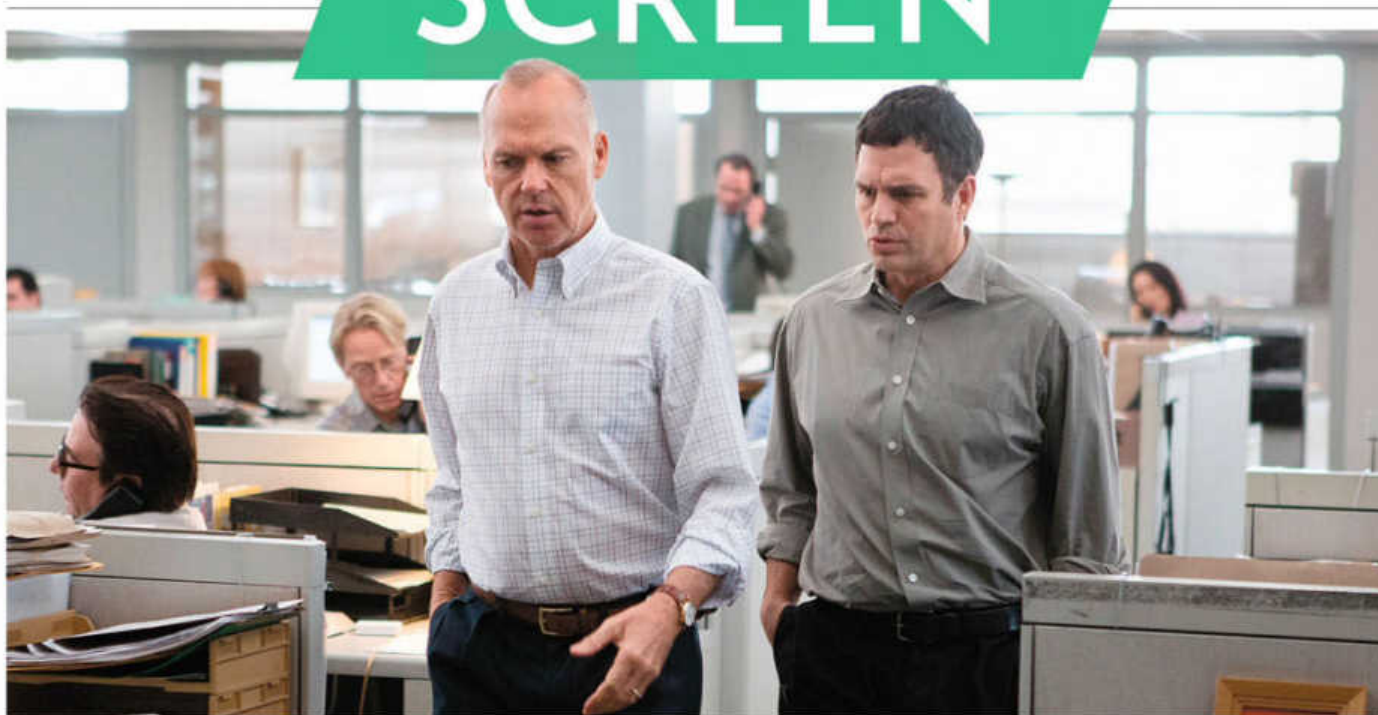
The Festival opens on February 17 with the UK premiere of the eagerly anticipated new film from the Coen brothers, *Hail, Caesar!*, starring George Clooney and Scarlett Johansson. Tickets for the premiere sold out in an incredible 23 minutes – but we have a pair of VIP passes to give away, which will also get the winner into the exclusive after-party. We're also throwing in a night's accommodation at boutique city centre hotel Malmaison for the lucky winner.

To enter this competition, answer the following question: Which pair of filmmakers directed *Hail, Caesar!*?

Send entries with HAIL, CAESAR! as the subject to competitions@bigissue.com or post to The Big Issue, 43 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 1HW. Include your name and address. Closing date is February 2. Include OPT OUT if you don't want to receive updates from The Big Issue. We will not pass your details to any third party. For full T&Cs see bigissue.com

The Glasgow Film Festival runs from February 17-28. Look at the programme at visitgff.glasgowfilm.org and follow @BigIssue for more great ticket freebies.

SCREEN



FILM / EDWARD LAWRENSON

Breaking news

The spotlight falls on an investigation by reporters which unearthed a child abuse cover-up in the Catholic Church

Spotlight is the true-life account of the *Boston Globe* journalists who 14 years ago exposed a child abuse cover-up by the city's Catholic church. It is a complicated story, drawn out over a number of years, involving sprawling detective work and Byzantine legal battles, and it is told with meticulous precision and restraint. At one point the punctilious editor of the *Globe* (Liev Schreiber) admonishes one of his writers for using a redundant adjective. Director Tom McCarthy seems to have applied this advice towards his own material. This is narrative film-making stripped of unnecessary detail or fabricated sentiment, and it's all the better for it: *Spotlight* is absorbing and revelatory.

The film takes its name from the small team of investigative reporters working for the *Globe*, charged with uncovering stories that can take years to publish. Giving a less showy but, for my money, richer performance than his comeback turn in *Birdman*, Michael Keaton is Spotlight boss Robby Robinson, a well-connected Bostonian journalist under whose affable front are the ice-sharp instincts of a dedicated news-hound. Following a hunch, the *Globe*'s adjective-averse editor Marty Baron (played

with almost scholarly reserve by Schreiber) suggests Robinson and his team follow up a brief news item about a paedophile priest.

What this small story points to is a picture of far wider systemic abuse that Boston's glad-handing cardinal has covered up for years – with the now-adult victims of abuse encouraged to drop their cases by authorities, under pressure from the church. One of Keaton's colleagues (played with raggedy charm and unflagging tenacity by Mark Ruffalo) earns the grudging trust of a lawyer for the victims, a performance of irascible integrity by Stanley Tucci. Another member of the Spotlight team (Rachel McAdams) speaks to surviving victims, encouraging their testimony in scenes that convey the legacy of abuse with unsettling economy.

The results offer an admiring portrayal of the cool, exacting professionalism of the Spotlight team. Echoing the great Bernstein-Woodward film *All the President's Men*, the film portrays the legwork that goes into a newspaper scoop with the forensic attention to detail of a

police procedural. This is less about a single moment of revelation than the slow accretion of evidence and on-record sources. Under the commanding direction of McCarthy – who himself played a journalist, albeit a far more ethically challenged one than any of those depicted here, in the final series of *The Wire* – it grips like a thriller.

What also emerges, almost incidentally, is a tribute to a bygone era of newspaper journalism. Although set in 2001, it's now inconceivable a local newspaper would devote the kind of resources the *Globe* invests in its Spotlight team. This is a moment after all when the influence of print dailies is about to be eclipsed by digital upstarts like America OnLine (glimpsed on an advertising billboard, like a monument marking the end of an era, towards the end of the film). Still, with the memories of the phone-hacking scandal lingering, it's salutary and bracing to be reminded – as *Spotlight* does with intelligence and dramatic acuity – that journalists can be heroes as well as villains.



We Come as Friends: a portrait of South Sudan

FINAL REEL

In *We Come as Friends*, documentary film-maker Hubert Sauper flies (in a home-built light aircraft) to conflict-scarred South Sudan on the eve of its 2011 independence. Stopping at key points throughout the country,

he chronicles a traumatised young nation, beset by poverty and locked into exploitative relationships with Western and Chinese business interests. Flecked with black humour, seething with anger, this is a sombre portrait of a troubled African nation.



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X-FILES MOVIE: THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE. PLUS, AFFLECK TO DIRECT A BATMAN FILM?



As *The X-Files* returns to our screens on Channel 5 in the UK for a special six-episode run, show creator Chris Carter has revealed he's written a third film. This was before the show got picked up for a small-screen return, though, so a future film remains in limbo.

The *Deadpool* film arrives in UK cinemas in February – but it won't be shown in China. The film's swearing, nudity and violence have fallen foul of the country's censors.

The upcoming X-Men television series *Legion* won't be crossing over with the film series. Instead, the show will exist in a 'parallel universe'.



Paramount has secretly launched a trailer for a sort-of sequel to *Cloverfield*. The film – *10 Cloverfield Lane* – has been scheduled for release in April.

Is Ben Affleck tempted to direct a Batman film? He alluded to it during a recent interview. But, of course, the incumbent Dark Knight would first have to finish *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* and *Justice League*.

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FOCUS

The big crash

High finance isn't so slick, says Adam McKay, whose Oscar-tipped film *The Big Short* serves as a reality check

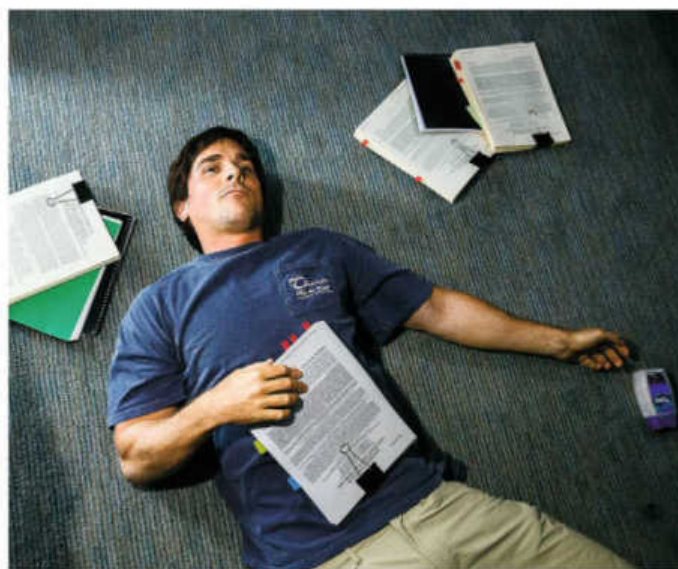
Ironically for a machine designed to take risks and make big money, Hollywood doesn't generally tell stories about financial investment. Too boring. Too complicated. Not enough female leads.

Since the banking catastrophe of 2008, even government regulators and business journalists have struggled to unpack the complexity of what exactly had been going on in the world of derivatives and understand the full implications of the fall-out. Yet a handful of film-makers have boldly attempted to tell the story on the big screen: *Margin Call*, *Arbitrage*, *99 Homes* and *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*.

Nominated for Best Picture at this year's Oscars, *The Big Short* is the most ambitious effort yet. Based on the non-fiction book by Michael Lewis, it tells the story of the guys who sensed a US housing bubble, saw a crash coming and bet a lot of money the banks would lose out big-time.

Director Adam McKay explains that he admires the other films made on the subject but thought there was still more to say. "Movies have tended to show Wall Street as an impressive-looking place, everyone is well-dressed, the buildings are monolithic," he says. "We wanted to tell a story about outsiders who looked rumpled and were just wrecked with anxiety about the whole system."

"Also, we didn't want to gloss over the details of what actually happened – we decided to go deep into it. There's been a lot of work going on [in banking] to make us think it's all too complicated. But basically they bundled mortgages and sold them as bonds, then they ran out of good mortgages and put crappy ones in. I took a lot of joy in puncturing the jargon



Christian Bale's character, hedge-fund manager Michael Burry, predicts the financial meltdown

and saying to an audience, 'You can get this'."

As you might expect with his background in comedy (McKay directed *Anchorman* and *Step Brothers*), there's high energy and humour. But *The Big Short* doesn't shy away from explaining mortgage-backed securities, credit default swaps and collateral debt obligations (Margot Robbie features naked in a bathtub to make the exegesis a little easier).

The other thing about banking films: it's hard to tell the difference between good guys and bad guys. McKay knew the audience might struggle to empathise with the characters played by Steve Carell, Christian Bale, Ryan Gosling and Brad Pitt because they all make money out of failure. Yet he views them as truth-tellers, people "calling bullshit" on a broken system.

"It's a situation where beggars can't be choosers," the director laughs. "There's not been a lot of heroes in the banking crisis. These characters actually believed in the system, believed in the market, and that for bad investments you made a

necessary counter investment. Steve Carell's character took joy in taking down corrupt companies – he'd been doing it for years. They thought they were helping the system work by kicking the big banks in the stomach."

McKay says he found reading about the US regulators, credit agencies and the financial press "shocking" because he didn't realise how much the big banks dominated these institutions tasked with oversight, and still do. How does he want the audience to react when they leave the cinema?

"Well, I find it exciting and energising to learn things I didn't know, even when it's bad news. It was exciting to look behind the curtain. But ultimately there's no other way to end the movie than tragedy. So I hope people feel a certain amount of my excitement and anger. They're entitled to be angry."

"I hope they're not depressed when they leave the theatre because feeling down doesn't do anything."

The Big Short is in cinemas
Interview: Adam Forrest
@adamtomforrest

BROADCAST VIEWS

SAM DELANEY

Whichever way you spin it: presentation over principle gets the public vote

They say politics is rock 'n' roll for ugly people but try telling that to the French, who would never let ugly people parade themselves in that most public of arenas. Look at Nicolas Sarkozy and Carla Bruni, making an absolute mockery of us Brits and our grotesque political classes. Sarkozy with his lovely matinee idol hair, rugged features and snazzy stacked heels. Bruni with her beguiling aura of lithe sexuality. They made Gordon and Sarah Brown look like a right pair of idiots. Which was a shame because I always liked Gordon Brown – a Prime Minister of integrity and intellect who was cruelly undone by the fact that he was, undeniably, the strangest fucking human being in Britain. Sarkozy, meanwhile, was a dim-witted egomaniac with a saucy wife and nice wardrobe. And yet we all loved him. That's politics for you: you can say what you like about the politicians but it's we, the public, who are the real dickheads.

We're the ones who allow ourselves to be distracted by the tricks, conceits and hoodwinkery of political imagery rather than bothering to pay proper attention to what these people are actually up to. We are slack-jawed imbeciles who, despite ourselves, succumb easily to the superficialities of political presentation – when we really should be making our minds up on the basis of something more noble. You know, like

principles, values and at least a quick scan of the party manifestos. We are, in short, putty in the hands of manipulative spin doctors who twist our understanding of the world this way and that with their infantile PR party tricks.

That's what swanky new French drama *Spin* (below) is all about. Two spindoctors, former friends and colleagues turned rivals, slug it out in a presidential election. It begins with a horribly apposite scenario: an attack on French soil by a suicide bomber who kills the president. It is into the resulting power vacuum that our two protagonists stride. Deals are done in fancy Parisian palaces, frantic phone calls are conducted in between philosophical drags on filterless cigarettes, impossibly handsome men in crumpled yet stylish suits shrug and bicker and walk frantically along corridors. Like *The West Wing*, *The Thick of It*, *Yes, Prime Minister*, *State of Play* and *House of Cards* before it, it offers an enticing peep behind the political curtain and shows the politicians themselves to be mere bit-part players – puppets at the mercy of the evil Geppettos of spin. All of which is, of course, a perfectly accurate depiction of the real world. But who are you to complain and bitch about it? If you want to change the world, stop watching telly and read a fucking book.

@DelaneyMan



OUT AND ABOUT



STREET LIFE

Janet Mendelsohn: Varna Road

(January 27–April 3, Birmingham; ikon-gallery.org) is a collection of the American's photography from 1967 to 1969 when she was a student at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. The photos focus on sex worker Kathleen, which stands in stark contrast to the momentum the women's rights movement was gathering at the time.

Jon Ronson's 2015 book, *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*, was a bracing analysis of the modern online desire to lock people in the virtual stocks for even the most minor of transgressions. In a five-night residency, **The Jon Ronson Mysteries** (January

26–30, London; leicestersquaretheatre.com) sees the author revisit this and some of his other books – including *The Psychopath Test* and *Them* – with a series of special guests including Louis Theroux, Adam Buxton and Bridget Christie. Nerdishness, forensic analysis and dry humour collide as preconceptions pop.



Traditionally taking place in the summer, the Pride festival has been a fixture in the capital for more than 40 years. But one event a year clearly isn't enough. **Winter Pride** (January 30, London; coronetheatre.co.uk) is as good a way as any to blow the whistle on an abstemious January.

MUSIC

CLASSICAL / DAVID FAY

Bowie's gone but so too has Boulez



In 2011 a scandal broke that undercover police had been spying on activists, forming relationships and even fathering children, fully funded by Special Branch. **Any Means Necessary** is a story inspired by real-life interviews with those involved. It traces how the abuse was perpetrated, the emotional costs it wrought and the victims' drive to find out the truth about the men who deceived them (Nottingham Playhouse, February 5-20; nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk).

Staying up all night dancing is a good way to (or at least try to) get back in shape after holiday indulgences. But you could also put your new year resolution of getting fit to good use (before you scrap the idea entirely) by raising money for a good cause. **The London Winter Run** (January 31, various locations, London;

winterrunseries.co.uk) is a 10km run in aid of Cancer Research. If nothing else, you get a nice loop around the city (Trafalgar Square, Aldwych, St Paul's, London Wall, Bank, Whitehall) as you wheeze your way through the kilometres.



Finally, lunar fun for kids can be had at **Space Buggies** (Saturdays and Sundays until March 27, Birmingham; birmingham-museums.org.uk) where they can, pumped up no doubt after seeing *Star Wars*, build their own moon vehicles.

Eamonn Forde

Over the past few weeks, the world has lost a pair of legendary musicians. But while news of the death of David Bowie made all the front pages, **Pierre Boulez's** passing was consigned to arts sections lurking near the back. Boulez, though, was as important a cultural icon as Bowie, albeit one whose sphere of influence – the classical music world – is far smaller. He was an artistic visionary, whose work both as composer and conductor had an enormous impact on classical music throughout the second half of the 20th century and beyond.

Boulez was 90 when he died on January 5. Although he himself endured a protracted illness, across the globe there were lengthy celebrations of the new nonagenarian, his compositions featuring frequently in concerts throughout 2015. The recordings he made as a conductor were reissued in honour of this milestone. Because of this, public exposure to Boulez and his music was heightened leading up to his death, meaning the significance of his passing has been more widely appreciated than it might otherwise have been.

There's no denying Boulez's music is difficult. I'll admit I struggle to listen to a lot of it; it's esoteric, uncompromising, extreme. But it is precisely these qualities that make it so vital in the development of new music. One of Boulez's main goals as a composer was to follow things through to their logical conclusions, relentlessly working through technical and stylistic issues by adhering to the logical framework in which he worked (as a child, maths was his other main talent).

He famously castigated Arnold Schoenberg, the father of serialism, for not living up to Boulez's strict standards in this respect (in fact, Boulez never shirked from the polemical, and frequently made bold statements bordering on the offensive, always with a twinkle in his eye). Without his intrepid expeditions into uncharted territories of composition



Pierre Boulez leads the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 2010

– total serialisation, improvisatory music, electro-acoustic music – composers would not be able to enjoy the wide field of musical expression in which they work today.

Nor, it must be said, would concert programmers. Boulez's legacy as a conductor is his championing of 20th-century music – especially by Debussy, Stravinsky,

Webern and his former teacher Messiaen – which has ensured that it has stayed on the schedules well into the 21st. He worked to great acclaim with some of the world's finest orchestras, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic. His capacity to analyse music, honed in his studies with Messiaen, is as

obvious in his performances as in his compositions. He had an uncanny ability to understand music: profoundly, intelligently and instinctively. No musician could ask for more.



Composer Steve Reich

LAST NOTE...

The programme for this year's **Vale of Glamorgan Festival**, which will take place from May 10-20, has been announced. The Welsh festival, which is unique in its dedication solely to the work of living composers, celebrates the landmark birthdays of Pëteris Vasks and John Metcalf (both 69) and Steve Reich (79).

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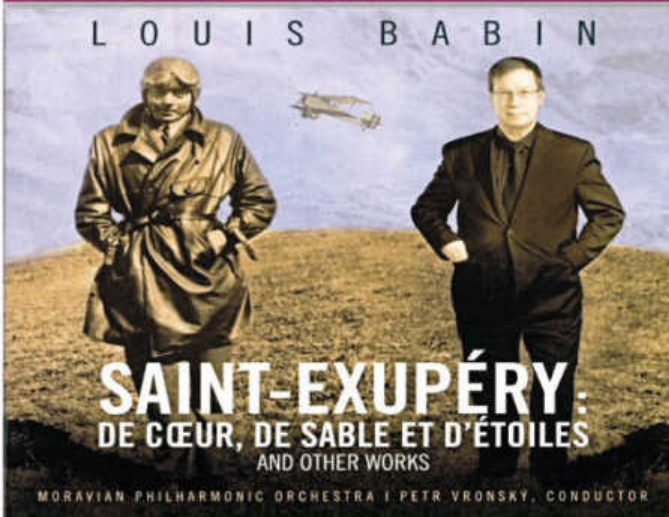
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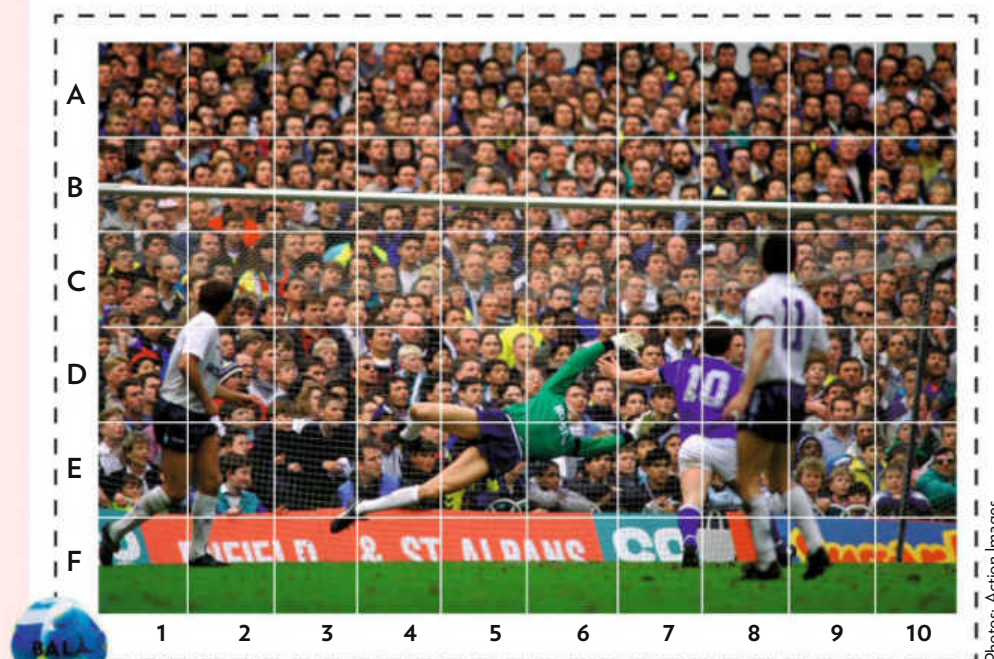


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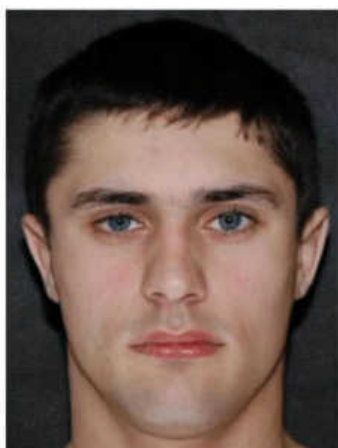
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(Last week's Spot the Ball revealed:
Everton v Aston Villa, 1976)

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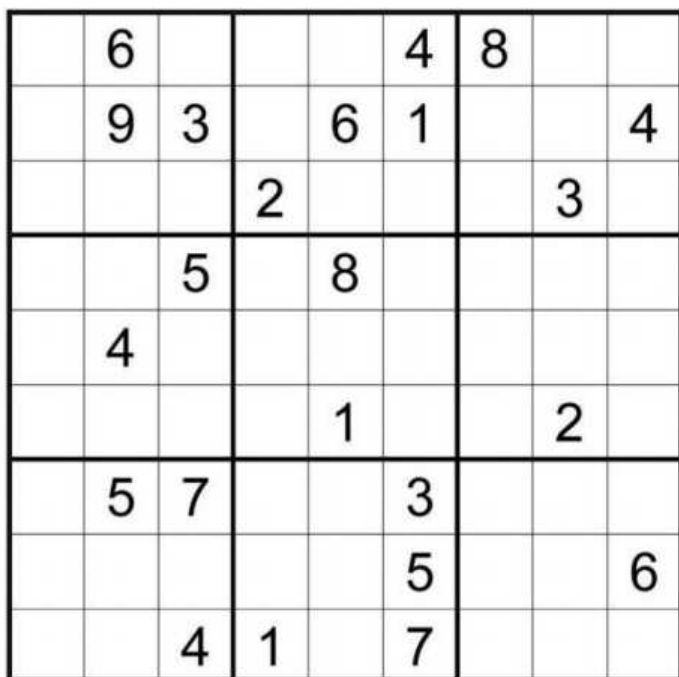
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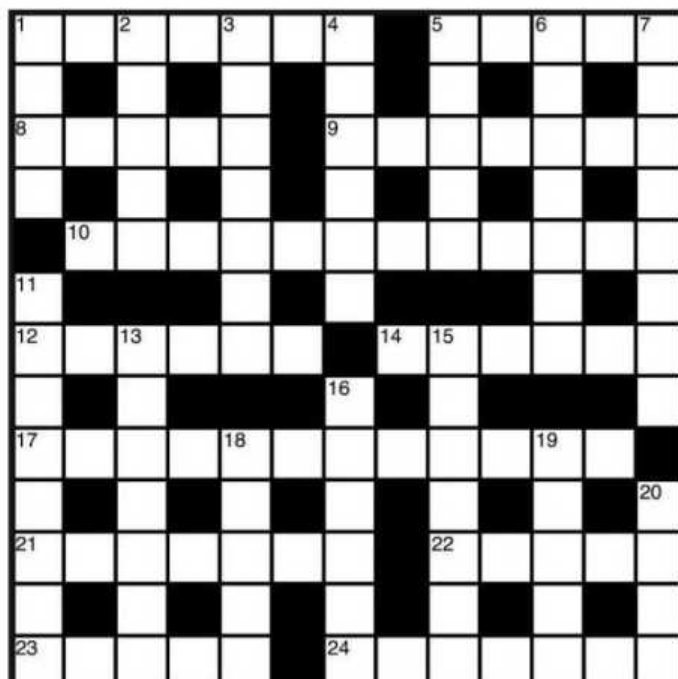


ISSUE 1188 SOLUTION

4	1	3	8	5	7	6	9	2
5	5	8	2	6	3	1	4	7
2	6	7	4	1	9	3	8	5
6	4	2	7	9	8	5	1	3
5	8	1	6	3	2	4	7	9
7	3	9	1	4	5	2	6	8
8	2	4	5	7	1	9	3	6
1	9	5	3	8	5	7	2	4
3	7	5	9	2	4	8	5	1

There is just one simple rule in sudoku: each row, column and 3 x 3 box must contain the numbers one to nine. This is a logic puzzle and you should not need to guess. The solution will be revealed next week.

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CRYPTIC CLUES

Across

1. Veered in three directions when derv is refined (7)
5. In Lancashire Belinda is one who resists authority (5)
8. The Spanish hold your chemical (5)
9. A large number tell the story (7)
10. Cross out when the music has finished (5,7)
12. Morning break for a drink? (6)
14. Injure she-cat badly (6)
17. What one is doing having 41 is doing (12)
21. Fluid, sometimes invisible, we will find in the reservoir (7)
22. Forbid very loud music in Scottish town (5)
23. Welcome to lose name from broken agreement (5)
24. Voter decapitated the one choosing the team (7)

Down

1. In races pedestrian ran (4)
2. Principle of arranging the 101 coming up (5)
3. I reveal make-up of a girl (7)
4. There is not enough tangled thread (6)
5. Right tree for a fast car! (5)
6. Perfume from a bunch of flowers? (7)
7. Surprisingly they lack a means of opening the door (8)
11. Quickly making off with a bird during chant (8)
13. Spot of recklessness included (7)
15. Competent to trap parent in rope (7)
16. Breakfast perhaps? That's an ear of maize (6)
18. Went majestically with a brush? (5)
19. Composition on reversible grid (5)
20. A service returned way out (4)

QUICK CLUES

Across

1. Crossbreed (7)
5. Waste matter (8)
8. Pseudonym (5)
9. In a confused state (5,2)
10. Angry (2,1,3,6)
12. Young cat (6)
14. Black Sea port (6)
17. Extremely fast (4,8)
21. Country in North Africa (7)
22. Polite (5)
23. Sudden forward movement (5)
24. Completely (7)

Down

1. Honey drink (4)
2. Scottish resort (5)
3. Laughable (7)
4. Greek letter (6)
5. Cooking pot (5)
6. Theban king (7)
7. Ideal hero (8)
11. Bony (8)
13. Fooled (5,2)
15. Shortfall (7)
16. Flexible (6)
18. Unwanted material (5)
19. Challenger (5)
20. Confederate (4)

Issue 1188 solution

CRYPTIC: Across – 5 Togo; 7 Abhorrence; 8 Neil; 9 Aggravated; 12 Ostler; 13 Portal; 14 Tracer; 16 Tremor; 17 Not for sale; 20 Cogs; 21 Earthquake; 22 Lead. Down – 1 Lama; 2 Whig; 3 Drover; 4 Instep; 5 Tenderness; 6 Guinea fowl; 10 Gastronome; 11 Relicensed; 15 Retort; 16 Trophy; 18 Away; 19 Ever.

QUICK: Across – 5 Ural; 7 Inspection; 8 Dash; 9 Drawbridge; 12 Evilily; 13 Rescue; 14 Blower; 16 Cousin; 17 Satisfying; 20 Wish; 21 Entangling; 22 Oner. Down – 1 Wild; 2 Asia; 3 Scurvy; 4 Tinder; 5 Understudy; 6 Absolution; 10 Revelation; 11 Well-wisher; 15 Rotate; 16 Casing; 18 Isis; 19 Gaga.

MY PITCH



Josh Clarke, 23

“I’ve found purpose again. One customer said she’d help me with my CV”

FACTS ABOUT ME...

MY FAVOURITE PLACE

The Cat and Wheel pub. It's a chilled-out, peaceful place but also lively, in a good way.

MY FAVOURITE DAY OUT

Burnham-on-Sea in the South West is a very nice place during the summer.

I’ve sold the magazine for six months and it’s going well. You have good days and bad days but the good days keep you going. The Christmas period was lovely with so many customers stopping to talk and wish me well.

I’ve struggled with homelessness since leaving care. I’ve been in supported accommodation, hostels, B&Bs and on the streets. Six months ago I was finding it hard to get by and was wondering what I was going to do with myself.

Since starting with The Big Issue, I found a sense of purpose and direction again. I’m looking forward with a bit of hope. A few of my customers say to me: “You’re a bright lad – I don’t want to see you doing this for years and years.” One lady said she’d help me get my CV together. I’d like to look

into training courses, and find out what might be possible in bar work, catering or the restaurant trade.

I’m living in a decent enough B&B now. It can be a bit loud, with a few families in there, but I cope. I think having a good attitude is important, and I seem to get along with people much better these days. I actually enjoy opportunities to meet new people.

Apart from a few years with my mum and dad, I grew up in foster homes and in the care system. I suppose it leaves you with a certain amount of baggage but the past is done, so I’m only ever interested in looking forward now.

There’s a good pub I like to go to called the Cat and Wheel. I’m not a big drinker – I just like the atmosphere and I go to play pool. I love pool. Me and a

few people I know play ‘winner stays on’, and I usually stay on quite a lot. One foster carer I lived with taught me how to play. And I’m pretty good now.

Other than that, I might watch TV at a friend’s house. It’s good to watch something like *EastEnders* or football. I’ve also got half-price theatre tickets from time to time, and that’s a real treat. I’ve seen *Mary Poppins*, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*. It’s so enjoyable to sit in the dark and watch a big show like that.

I’ve moved around a lot – growing up with different families in the South West and Midlands. But I was born in Bristol and I’ve grown to like the place. I’d like to make the best of it here.

Interview: Adam Forrest
Photo: Sean Malyon

DID YOU SEE JOHN?

Have a look at page 26. Did you see him? Or did you look past him and carry on with your life?



Sponsor a room - just 40p a day

Like many of the homeless young people who come to Centrepont, John is no stranger to being ignored. When he was just four his father walked out and the attention he got from his mum was far from hugs and kisses.

She showed him no affection and even his earliest memories were of her violence towards him. *"When I was five, Mum kicked me hard in the stomach. She was always shouting and would become violent."*

"I'd developed a nervous tick, but mum threatened to hurt me if I let anything show...It was too much to handle, too much commotion".

At 15 John started sleeping down by the canal and in a derelict high rise flat. Lonely and terrified, he turned to drink, self-harming and even became suicidal. When he finally ended up in hospital, his mother's response was to fly off on holiday. He'd never felt so rejected.

While John's story may sound shocking to you, many of the homeless young people who come to Centrepont have been through similar experiences. They find themselves homeless after being victims of neglect, violence, sexual abuse and family breakdown.

By giving just 40p a day (£12 a month) you can get a vulnerable homeless person off the streets right now. You'll give them a room of their own and all the support they need to rebuild their life.

They'll receive counselling to deal with their problems, career advice to help

them into college or a job, and basic life skills, such as how to budget and pay bills. So, when they're ready to leave, they can live independently.

Many people don't give homeless people like John a second glance, but today you can be the person who chooses not to ignore them.

Thanks to someone like you, John is now safe at Centrepont.

Sponsor a room at Centrepont.

Call 0800 138 4499

Visit centrepontroom.org.uk or return the form below

Why become a Centrepont Room Sponsor?

- For just 40p a day, you could help a young person escape homelessness forever
- You'll receive a welcome pack and regular updates about the progress of young people you're supporting
- 89% of young people who come through Centrepont go on to find education, employment or their own home
- 86p of every pound we spend goes directly towards services for homeless young people



Your regular gift will be used to assist young people in sponsored rooms and for the general purposes of Centrepont - working with homeless and socially excluded young people.

Will you sponsor a Centrepont room and get a homeless young person off the streets for good?

- ☐ I wish to sponsor a room at **£12 a month**
☐ I wish to sponsor two rooms at **£24 a month**
☐ I wish to sponsor rooms at **£ a month**

Please collect my payment on the 1st/15th of every month (please circle preferred date)

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

To The Manager: _____ Originators Identification No. **659107**
Name and full address of your Bank or Building Society: _____

Postcode _____

Name(s) of Account Holder(s) _____

Bank Sort Code: - - Account Number:

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society: Please pay Centrepont Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction, subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Centrepont and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account

To protect the privacy of those we help, a model has been used for the photograph and the name has been changed. The story however is true and as told by a young person.

RAP1516B-15D

Full Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

In accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act, Centrepont will use your personal data to process your donation. By providing your telephone number and email address you agree that Centrepont may contact you on occasion about your donations by telephone, SMS/or email. If you do not want to receive this information please write to Supporter Care, Central House, 25 Camperdown Street, London E1 8DZ. We will never sell or share your details with other organisations.

Under the Government's Gift Aid scheme, all donations made by UK tax payers are worth a quarter more. To make your gift go further, just tick the box and date

giftaid it

☐ I would like Centrepont to reclaim the tax I have paid on all donations I have made in the four years prior to this year, and any donations I may make in the future. I am a UK taxpayer. I am paying at least as much in income and/or capital gains tax in a year as will be reclaimed by all charities to which I give in that tax year.

Date / /

**Please return this form to: Centrepont Room Sponsorship
Freepost ANG 2640, Colchester, CO2 8BR. Thank you**

Registered Charity No 29421

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